The Loon

SPRING 1995

VOLUME 67 – NUMBER 1

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 Street S.E., University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455–0104. E-mail mou@biosci.cbs.umn.edu. Anyone interested may join. Members receive our two publications: ***The Loon*** and *Minnesota Birding.*

EDITOR OF *The Loon:* Robert B. Janssen, 10521 S Cedar Lake Road, #212, Minnetonka, MN 55305 (612-546-4220). The Editor invites articles, short notes, and illustrations about Minnesota birds. See back cover for details.

MEMBERSHIPS: Yearly donations to join the M.O.U. are as follows: Regular $20, Youth (through age 17) $15; Family $30; Supporting $50; Life $400. Canadian and Foreign Subscriptions, $25. Also available are back issues of ***The Loon*** ($3.00 each ppd.) and M.O.U. checklists of Minnesota birds (minimum lots of 20 for $5.00 postage paid).

ASSOCIATE EDITORS OF *The Loon:* Kim Eckert, 8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804; Anthony Hertzel, 8461 Pleasant View Dr., Mounds View MN 55112; Peder Svingen, 2602 E. 4th St, Duluth, MN 55812; Dr. Harrison Tordoff, Bell Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455; Nancy Weber, 24420 224th Ave. SE, Maple Valley, WA 98038 **PHOTO EDITOR:** Warren Nelson, 603 2nd St. NW, Aitkin, MN 56431.

EDITORS OF *Minnesota Birding:* Jim and Jude Williams, 3326 Martha Lane, Minnetonka MN 55345. Published bi-monthly.

MINNESOTA BIRD REPORTS: Statewide 612-780-8890 Duluth 218-525-5952

ISSN 0024–645X

Minnesota's First Calliope Hummingbird
Discovery

Parker Backstrom

On 28 November 1994, during my tenure as the operator of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union (M.O.U.) statewide bird hotline, I received a telephone call from Mrs. Jean Herron. She reported that a hummingbird had appeared in her yard in south Minneapolis in early November and was still present as of the date she called. My interest was immediately piqued, knowing that the presence of a hummingbird in Minnesota as late as November raised the real possibility that the bird might prove to be a vagrant, rather than a Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Minnesota's only regular representative of this group.

During a return call to Mrs. Herron I learned that the bird was first noted in their backyard on or about 2 November. During the next three weeks the bird fed upon flower blossoms, still blooming in the unseasonably warm fall weather. Thanksgiving weekend brought with it a cold front and the first snowfall of the season. The bird could be seen feeding through the falling snow but the cold temperatures quickly put an end to the floral bloom. Mrs. Herron filled a hummingbird feeder and hung it from a clothesline pole in the back yard. The bird adjusted quickly to this new food source. Although temperatures were now in the upper twenties during the day, direct sunlight shining on the feeder allowed a portion of the sugar and water solution to remain liquified and available to the bird. Each night Mrs. Herron would take the feeder inside the house to prevent it from freezing solid, then hang it outside again before she left for work the next morning.

The bird was tentatively identified by Mrs. Herron as a female or immature Black-chinned Hummingbird. After gaining permission to visit her yard, Anthony X. Hertzel and I made an initial visit on the morning of 29 November. We were quickly able to rule out Ruby-throated and Black-chinned Hummingbirds by wing feather structure (see ***The Loon*** 64:183–188) and plumage characteristics. A distinct orange wash on the flanks of this female-type bird initially suggested it was a member of the genus *Selasphorus*. However, the paleness of the orange wash, the lack of any orange feather edges anywhere on the dorsal surface, and the lack of any visible rufous coloration at the base of the tail seemed to contradict our initial deduction.

On the evening of 29 November, I telephoned the Herrons in order to secure permission to put news of the bird on the bird alert. After setting up some ground rules for visitors to follow, permission was given to reveal the location. Over the next four days, which happened to coincide with the annual M.O.U. Paper Session at the University of Minnesota's Bell Museum, many birders visited the yard and all were treated to prolonged views of the hummingbird. Considerable debate ensued about its identity. With research and discussion ongoing, conclusions were now being drawn that the bird was, in fact, a Calliope Hummingbird.

Overnight temperatures were now beginning to fall into the single digits. Correspondingly, the bird was starting to appear less and less vital. It appeared that the physical strain being placed on the bird by the frigid temperatures was not being compensated for by the sugar solution in the feeder. The bird began to lose throat and tail feathers exposing bare skin to the elements. Its behavior changed as well. It was now feeding

with more and more frequency and never leaving the immediate vicinity of the feeder. With low temperatures of -5° F forecast for the night of 5-6 December, it was clear that the bird would be unable to withstand this strain in its condition. On 5 December arrangements were in place to try to capture the bird for care and rehabilitation. **3409 Emerson Ave. S. #4, Minneapolis MN, 55408.**

Capture

Harrison B. Tordoff

The Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee meeting on the afternoon of 4 December 1994 provided a timely chance to discuss what, if anything, should be done about the hummingbird. Everyone present agreed that it was doomed, given its reliance on a single feeder, providing sugar water for energy but not the proteins needed for long-term survival. With Minnesota winter at hand, it seemed inevitable that the bird would soon die. One option was to leave it to its fate, hoping that its body would be found for confirmation of its specific identity and for permanent museum preservation, but the probability of finding it after death seemed small. Killing the bird to preserve it as a specimen seemed to be the most rational solution, but coldhearted. No one was willing to shoulder the negative public response that might come from killing this bird. The most bizarre, yet humane, proposal was to capture the hummingbird and fly it by plane to some warmer place for release.

Bob Janssen arranged with the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center at the University of Minnesota to receive the bird, once captured, restore its energy reserves, and arrange air transportation to some appropriate southern destination. Once in the hand, the necessary measurements and photographs needed to identify the bird could be made. All of this was authorized by collecting permits held by the Bell Museum of Natural History. The plan would clearly be very difficult to carry out successfully, but in the end there seemed no better choice.

At 2 P.M. on 5 December, with wind from the north at about 12 miles per hour, temperature 19 degrees F. after an overnight low of 14, Bruce Fall, John Klicka, and I met Parker Backstrom at Mrs. Herron's feeder. The hummingbird was still alive, drinking the sugar water as we approached. Disturbed by us, it flew to the east and was gone for about ten minutes as we set up a net to capture it. Soon it came back and fed. Bruce tried to chase it into the net, which was only a couple of feet away, but it saw the net, flew over it and perched on a bush in the yard, on the other side of the net from the feeder. Twice more it went to the feeder and twice it perched on the top net cord. It dodged, hovered, flew vertically, but then flew the length of net, veered, and lodged in the top shelf.

Bruce took it from net, but it hardly struggled. In less than five minutes, it died. Overwhelmed by stress, prevented from feeding for a perhaps crucial ten minutes by our activity, with no energy reserves, the hummingbird died before we could even get it to the warm car. John Klicka prepared the bird for the collection of the Bell Museum of Natural History. It weighed 2.7 grams, had no fat, and was a female, probably adult judging by its ovaries. Photographs show that in its last days alive, the hummingbird lost several tail feathers as well as feathers around a growing bare spot on its throat. As John prepared the specimen, feathers continued to fall out. Stress can induce feather loss, as is known to happen in "fright molt," the sudden loss of feathers by some birds when frightened.

William R. Dawson, a University of Michigan expert on metabolic responses of birds to cold, responded to the hummingbird's story by pointing out to me that a Calliope Hummingbird, which this proved to be, is not as fragile as it may appear. Even in summer, it may be exposed to near freezing temperatures in the high mountains where many nest. Recent studies of hummingbird responses to cold show that individuals lacking substantial fat reset their thermostats at night from the usual body temperature of 40 degrees C. (104 degrees F.) to 18 degrees C. (64 degrees F.) and regulate at the lower level for the night, thereby reducing their total daily energy requirements by about 25 percent. At dawn, they resume their body temperature of 40 degrees C. in an arousal process that takes about an hour. The high cost in time of reheating a large, cool body makes torpor too expensive for use by large birds on a daily basis. What pays for a hummingbird simply won't work for a kestrel, for example, which would require about 12 hours to warm up from 20 to 40 degrees C. ("Ornithology," F.B. Gill, 1989, W.H. Freeman Co., p. 113). So ended the life of this Calliope Hummingbird, first of its species to be recorded in Minnesota. **Bell Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis MN 55455.**

Museum Notes

John Klicka

Minnesota's first Calliope Hummingbird specimen record was initially identified by Bruce Fall and Bud Tordoff shortly after it arrived at the museum on the day of its capture (5 December 1994). During the subsequent specimen preparation I determined that the bird was a female. The ovary was white and with dimensions of approximately 1.5 x 1 mm. Because the granular condition of the ovary is not characteristic of hatching-year (HY) birds, the specimen probably represents an adult female. The skull of the specimen was unossified but it appears that this is not a useful character for reliably aging hummingbirds.

The bird, weighing 2.7 g when fresh, was carrying no visible fat. Oddly, there was evidence of light molting on the crown and very light molting throughout the body plumage. It is likely that this condition represents an interrupted molt. The molt (prebasic) probably began normally in a relatively favorable environment and was subsequently stopped before completion once food resource limitations and energetic conditions became severe.

The following measurements were taken just prior to preparation: exposed culmen: 14.4 mm; wing chord: 43.3 mm; and longest rectrix length: 16.5 mm. On the whole, these generally fall within those described for this species. The tail, shorter by almost 4 mm than published values, may have been inaccurately measured, since the primary concern was to avoid further feather loss before the specimen was prepared. The values for comparable *Selasphorus* hummingbird measurements in Table 1 are taken from Oberholser (1974:487–491); all represent adult females.

Upon comparing the prepared bird with the Museum's hummingbird collection, I easily verified the specific identification of this bird. It is nearly identical in both size and plumage to a 15 July (1931) female Calliope Hummingbird (BMNH 11823) collected in British Columbia by Breckenridge. A second 15 July (1894) Calliope specimen (BMNH 4289) from Montana also matches well with the exception of having a much bronzer back. For this species, bronzy

	Bill	Wing	Tail
Broad-tailed	18.0-20.1 (18.8)	48.5-52.1 (50.5)	27.9-32.5 (30.7)
Rufous	17.0-19.0 (18.0)	42.9-45.0 (44.2)	24.4-27.9 (26.2)
Calliope	15.0-16.0 (15.7)	40.9-43.9 (42.7)	20.1-22.6 (21.6)

Table 1.

upperparts are characteristic of first winter females (Oberholser 1974:491). This suggests that the Montana specimen is an HY bird and validates our supposition that the green-backed Minnesota specimen is an adult. **1987 Upper Buford Circle, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108**.

Identification Notes

Bruce A. Fall

Details of the capture of Minnesota's first state record Calliope Hummingbird are reported elsewhere in this issue. Soon after we returned to the Bell Museum with the fresh specimen and just before freezing it, Bud Tordoff and I took three measurements (exposed culmen, wing chord and tail), and then a series of color photographs of the head, wing, spread tail, and body. Shortly after its preparation, the specimen was sent to the LSU Museum and currently it remains on loan there. This note is based on examination of these photos and of specimens of this and other species in the Bell Museum collection.

Even if it had not been captured, this bird probably eventually would have been correctly identified from the photos and descriptions of other observers. But there were some key additional features available from the specimen that permitted conclusive identification. While it was coming to the feeder, various observers identified it as Rufous/Allen's, Broad-tailed, Calliope, and perhaps other species as well, but there was no consensus. This was another good lesson on the difficulty of identifying many female/subadult male hummingbirds in the field — without lengthy and very close views, it is not possible to see the features necessary for identification, and even under excellent conditions conclusive determination may not be possible.

General plumage and structural characters indicated that it belonged to one of the following four hummingbird genera: *Archilochus*, including Ruby-throated *(A. colubris)* and Black-chinned *(A. alexandri)*; *Calypte*, including Anna's *(C. anna)* and Costa's *(C. costae)*; *Selasphorus*, including Rufous *(S. rufus)*, Allen's *(S. sasin)* and Broad-tailed *(S. platycercus)*; or *Stellula*, with Calliope *(S. calliope)* being the only species. *Archilochus* was eliminated by several features: both species lack the cinnamon-buffy wash on the sides and crissum that was apparent on this bird in the field, and both species also lack any cinnamon-rufous in the tail. Some observers, myself included, could not detect any rufous in the tail on this bird in the field, but it was evident in the hand, as a thin border or edging on the basal one-third to one-half of all rectrices except the outer pair. In the field, the upper tail coverts mostly concealed these cinnamon edges. A further diagnostic character that eliminates *Archilochus* is the shape of the primary wing feathers. In *Archilochus*, the outer four primaries are each about the same width near the tip, while the inner six are abruptly narrower and sharply angled; in the other three genera, there is no such apparent

Calliope Hummingbird specimen. Photo by Bruce Fall.

abrupt decrease of width or change of shape. This feature is illustrated by Parker Backstrom (***The Loon***, 64:187) and Baltosser (1987). In *Calypte* all ten primaries are about the same width and shape; in *Selasphorus* and *Stellula*, the outer five or six are about the same width, while the inner ones are somewhat narrower, but this progression occurs gradually, not abruptly. This character for distinguishing *Archilochus* from other genera is worth learning since it does have potential value in the field, not just with specimens.

The two *Calypte* species were also eliminated because both lack cinnamon-buff on the underparts and cinnamon-rufous on the rectrices. The three *Selasphorus* species presented the most likely alternative possibilities. Females of all three have extensive cinnamon-rufous on the basal one-third to one-half of at least the outer three or four pairs of rectrices (Ridgway 1911; Stiles 1972). In the field, this could be difficult to ascertain; in the specimen, it was apparent that the cinnamon in the tail was restricted to the outer fringe of the basal half of the rectrices and did not extend to the interior of these feathers. Another key feature that separates *Stellula* from *Selasphorus* (and also from other U.S. hummingbirds) is the shape of the rectrices, especially the central pair (Ridgway 1911). In *Stellula*, these are widest near the tip (technically "subspatulate"), whereas in the other genera, they are widest near the base and become gradually narrower toward the tip. This might be a potential identification character if photos of a spread tail are obtained; it is apparent in my photos of this specimen and also in the other Museum specimens. The short bill of this bird (14.4 mm) is marginally smaller than bill measurements given by Ridgway for female Calliope Hummingbird (range, 15–16 mm; n=10), but substantially shorter than those presented for Rufous, Allen's or Broad-tailed (minimum of 17 mm in all three). By itself, the bill length is diagnostic among all the species discussed here. Our measurement of tail length (16.5 mm) may have been inaccurate since we were trying to minimize handling the bird in order to prevent further feather loss. Minimum published tail length for adult fe-

male Calliope is 19.5 mm (Ridgway 1911), and this species is the shortest-tailed of all hummingbirds considered here. Minimum tail length reported by Ridgway for female *Selasphorus* is 23 mm *(S. sasin).* Accurate tail measurement will be made on the specimen when it returns to the Bell Museum, but the other features presented here permit the conclusive identification of this bird. **4300 29th Ave. S Minneapolis, MN 55406.**

Literature Cited

Baltosser, W. H. 1987. Age, species, and sex determination of four North American hummingbirds. No. Amer. Bird Bander 12:151–166.

Ridgway, R. 1911. The birds of North and Middle America. Bull. U.S. Nat. Mus., No. 50, Part V.

Stiles, F. G. 1972. Age and sex determination in Rufous and Allen's Hummingbirds. Condor 74:25–32.

Further Identification Notes

Nancy L. Newfield

I inspected the Calliope Hummingbird specimen taken in Minneapolis on 5 December 1994. (Per my own measurements, exposed culmen = 13.6; wing chord = 42.2.) It is a very interesting specimen. Except for the missing feathers on the throat, the bird appeared to be in good condition and it is prepared well. I compared the Minnesota specimen to four specimens (LSUMZ 139373, LSUMZ 107915, LSUMZ 154465, LSUMZ 112917) taken in Louisiana in December and to three additional feather specimens (T01601, T01676, T01648) in my own collection. Measurements were made with dial calipers with the wing in a natural, not flattened position.

Though the measurement of the exposed culmen seems a bit short, the measurement of the wing chord is consistent with the diagnosis of the sex of this bird. Based on the shape and color pattern of rectrix #1 (using Baltosser, William H. 1994. Age and sex determination in the Calliope Hummingbird. *Western Birds* 25:104–109.). I concur with the diagnosis of adult (AHY) female — up to a point. The bill of this specimen is corrugated along about 50% of its length, an indication of immaturity according to Ortiz-Crespo (1972. "A new method to separate immature and adult hummingbirds." *Auk* 89:851–857.) However, the four LSUMZ specimens exhibit more extreme corrugations than does the Minnesota specimen.

The plumage of this bird appears only slightly worn and is very bright in coloration, a character one would not expect in a Calliope Hummingbird in December as that time of year is nearing the end of a normal plumage cycle. The amount of cinnamon-buff in the plumage is extreme. There is some dirt evident on the white tips of the outer rectrices and they are somewhat worn, indicating that these feathers have been in place for some time. Molt ordinarily takes place in March and April for this species. I could speculate that this is a bird that molted into adult plumage precociously or one that retained the bill corrugations beyond the normal 6-8 months, but neither of these theories can be substantiated from the evidence.

I would encourage the use of the term adult rather than AHY, a bird banding term that is not founded in biology.

I appreciate the opportunity to study this interesting specimen. There is nothing in evidence to suggest the reason that this individual was residing in Minnesota rather than in Mexico! **Casa Colibri, 3016 – 45th St, Metairie, Louisiana, 70001.**

A Tale of "Tails": New Records at Hawk Ridge

Frank J. Nicoletti

After a great Broad-winged Hawk flight over Hawk Ridge on the weekend of 16–18 September 1994, the weather did an about-face for hawk migration for about the next month. Fog seemed to blanket the ridge more than usual, and there were a few more rainy days than normal and many days of wind with a southerly component. Overall, this combined to put the migration on hold. Eventually, the weather had to change, and when it did the birds staged a very impressive movement. Those fortunate enough to be at Hawk Ridge in late October of 1994 were rewarded with an incredible raptor flight, and they witnessed records fall as history was made over Duluth.

On Sunday, 23 October, the movement began. It was a blustery, unsettled day with temperatures in the low 40s. Intermittent light rain squalls in the morning put a damper on the hawk watchers but not the hawks. In the afternoon the sun appeared briefly between the heavy clouds. The wind was predominantly from the west between 17 and 30 mph. At Summit Ledges, Tim Dawson, Ben Yokel, Dudley Edmondson and Steve Millard gathered in the morning and watched Bald Eagles and Red-tailed Hawks flying through the multicolored arc of a rainbow; a truly beautiful sight. The highlight that day was 868 Red-taileds, 75 Bald Eagles and six Golden Eagles with several other species tallied. Due to a heavy hawk movement later in the afternoon, specifically of Red-taileds and Bald Eagles (50 in the last three hours), and with the good weather expected to continue, we knew we could expect a great flight the next day. However, little did we know what was to come.

On Monday, 24 October, the conditions were similar to the previous day, but with morning snow squalls instead of rain. Birds were already moving by 7:30 A.M. when we all met at the main overlook. I assumed my usual post at the overlook and was assisted by Flip Rogers, while Steve Millard, Ben Yokel and Brain Wheeler chose to view hawks from on top of Summit Ledge. Due to the overcast skies and strong northwest winds, most birds were quite low. In fact, many were below eye level, affording a great opportunity to note the dorsal plumage on various Red-taileds as well as Golden and Bald Eagles. Many birds were moving slowly into a strong crosswind, which allowed ample time to study and appreciate them. That morning it was incredible watching the large number of hawks being pushed in front of these snow squalls as they moved down the Lester River valley. The valley was blanketed in snow as the squalls passed through. These sudden bursts of snow didn't slow the flight appreciably, as there were always birds moving. After having been bottled up by weeks of unsuitable weather, it was as if the entire migration that day became a single entity with only one purpose: keep moving! This day's flight was equally split between the east and west side of the ridge.

As the hours passed, we realized we were witnessing an epic flight. The day wound up with an incredible total of 4,730 hawks counted between the hours of 7:30 and 5:00. Among the ten species of hawks counted were the following: Turkey Vulture 5, Bald Eagle 323, Northern Harrier 40, Sharp-shinned Hawk 313, Northern Goshawk 8, Broad-winged Hawk 1, Red tailed Hawk 3,988, Rough-

legged Hawk 28, Golden Eagle 23, and a Merlin. The highlights were many: new North American records were set for Bald Eagle (323) and Red-tailed Hawk (3988), with previous records being from Hawk Ridge: 171 eagles on 19 November 1993 and 2558 Red-taileds on 24 October 1984. Golden Eagles set a new Hawk Ridge record of 23, with the previous record being 12 on 23 October 1992.

However, the real highlight, at least for us, was the opportunity to study the various subspecies, forms, and variants among the Red-tailed Hawks. Of the 3988 Red-taileds counted, the breakdown was as follows: *Buteo jamaicensis calurus*, adult dark morph 58, immature dark morph 11, dark morph unknown age 8; *B. j. Harlani*, adult dark morph 9; light morph 3: *B. j. krideri* 2, excluding 2 or 3 intergrades. These birds represent geographic differences in the Red-tailed Hawk populations that allows us to identify where some of the flight is originating from. The rarest subspecies or form seen, Harlan's, exclusively breeds in Alaska and northern British Columbia. This massive flight had a definite component of western birds. We also observed an adult eastern Red-tailed (dorsal view only) with partial (60–70%) albinism. The tail was normal, but the back was uniformly white from the head to the uppertail coverts. The secondaries were mostly white and about half the primaries were white. The bird was bilaterally symmetrical. This beautiful buteo, only in view for a few minutes, contrasted sharply with a background of dark pines and dun-colored deciduous trees.

On Tuesday, 25 October, skies were mostly cloudy with northwest winds at 10–20 mph, with some clearing by late afternoon. For the second day in a row, the hawk flight was very impressive. A total of 3,783 hawks was counted between the hours of 6:45 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. Among the 3,783 hawks counted were the following: Turkey Vulture 2, Bald Eagle 145, Northern Harrier 4, Sharp-shinned Hawk 72, Northern Goshawk 17, Red-tailed Hawk 3,488, Rough-legged Hawk 31, Golden Eagle 22, and a Merlin. After having nearly 1500 Red-taileds pass by early on, the hour between 11:00 and 12:00 only yielded 145. The remainder of the previous day's pocket had seemed to be emptied out, and we thought the flight was essentially over for the day. Yet when the midpoint of the day was reached, a second flight kicked in and produced nearly 2000 more Red-taileds.

Although this flight was spectacular as far as numbers are concerned, it differed from the previous day's flight in a number of ways. The flight path, especially for Red-taileds, was somewhat off the ridge and good numbers of birds were soaring and thermaling out toward Lake Superior. This, in combination with poor early morning lighting to the east, made looking for "unusual" Red-taileds hard, and only yielded the following: *B. j. calurus*, adult dark morph 8, immature dark morph 5, and one each of adult light and dark morph *B. j. harlani*. Although the Red-taileds flight wasn't so much on the ridge, the eagles and the other raptors were and made for some beautiful views. While I was at the main overlook, Steve Millard, Flip Rodgers, Kim Claypool, and Carol Schmidt were watching from Summit Ledges in late morning, and five Golden Eagles were soaring overhead at one time! These birds glided in from the northeast and kettled over us. These were also seen from the overlook and made for an impressive peak hour of nine. This species sometimes travels in loose aggregations. Another incredible day!

For the next three days, the winds took a more southerly tack and temperatures climbed well into the 50s. Migration slowed to a trickle and hit bottom on Friday, the 28th, when only 24 raptors were seen of four species. But Saturday, 29 October, brought a stiff west wind (10–20 mph), sunshine all day, and temperatures in the low 50s, and once again the raptor spigot opened and birds flowed through the Duluth sky. Ray

Glassel and Bob Janssen showed up at the Ridge to try to add Golden Eagle to their St. Louis County lists. After waiting patiently for several hours, they were rewarded. Highlights among the totals on the 29th included 62 Bald Eagles, 578 Red-taileds, 7 Golden Eagles, an immature/female-type Richardson's Merlin, and an adult Red-shouldered Hawk.

On Sunday, 30 October, the flight and weather were similar to the previous day's flight, with one notable exception: 218 Bald Eagles versus the previous day's 62. This represented the second highest total for Hawk Ridge. The peak hour was between 10:00 and 11:00 when 74 birds passed by. The only Golden Eagle came late in the afternoon.

Monday, 31 October, would prove to be an unforgettable day and a great way to end a rather dismal month, barring the last week. However, unless you were there witnessing the flight, one would have never expected what was to come. The weather at best could have been called fair. It was the second day after a weak front, temperatures in the high 40s, sunny, winds light (under 8 mph) from the north-northwest, often being over taken by lake breeze (southeast wind). The flight the day before showed no prediction that this day was going to be as good as it turned out to be. There was no significant late movement of Bald Eagles or Red-taileds, hence we were just glad to get what we could and call it a month. We arrived at seven o'clock, but the flight didn't really start until 9:00 A.M. when Red-taileds and Bald Eagles started to move. The flight was low to moderate in height and was for the most part over us, with birds coming off the end of Moose Mountain (the next ridge north). The reason for this seemed to be the hawks were riding the winds where the light northwesterly and the cooler southeasterly lake effect winds met, producing good turbulences. The light was excellent and our views of the birds were great.

It soon became apparent that we were undergoing another massive movement of Bald Eagles. We had a peak hour of ninety birds, a number exceeding the entire seasonal totals for all but one year in the 1970s (there were 93 in 1974). At day's end, the total for the day stood at 410 Bald Eagles, breaking the week-old record by 88. The five hours beginning at 11:00 A.M. revealed counts of Bald Eagles as follows: 90, 72, 67, 81, 41. We also had 1,146 Red-taileds, a significant total. Golden Eagles put in a great showing with 18, including a group of four overhead at once. This Halloween flight also included two record late Turkey Vultures, breaking the old Hawk Ridge late date by one day. A Short-eared Owl soaring high with Red-taileds made another welcome sight in the bright blue sky.

This flight between 23 and 31 October was the major reason for the record-breaking flights for Red-tailed Hawks and both Bald and Golden Eagles this season. This nine-day period proved to be the peak flight for Red-tailed Hawks and Golden Eagles with 10,907 and 78 respectively, which represent about 71% and 61% of the season long totals of 15,299 and 131. Little did we know that this flight was just the beginning of a massive movement of Bald Eagles and Rough-legged still to come in November. The November total was 2,600 Bald Eagles and 676 Rough-legged Hawks, bringing the season totals to 4,327 and 988 respectively. As a result, the Rough-legged Hawk became the fourth species to break the season-long record at Hawk Ridge. Its peak day was 176 on 29 November, only 28 below the record of 204. The peak days for Bald Eagles were 19 November with 578 and the 22nd with 743 birds, which again broke all previous records! There were 5,281 raptors counted in November which represents by far the largest number ever documented for this month at Hawk Ridge.

The November 1994 total count from the main overlook was 5,293 which was a record number for this month. November totals do not include those observed

Composite season totals for 1994 for Hawk Ridge were as follows:

Turkey Vulture	841	Osprey	315
Bald Eagle	4368 (record)	Northern Harrier	1390 (record)
Sharp-shinned Hawk	19,183	Cooper's Hawk	192
Broad-winged Hawk	51,383	Red-tailed Hawk	15,488 (record)
Rough-legged Hawk	1011 (record)	Golden Eagle	133 (record)
American Kestrel	2391	Merlin	453 (record)
Peregrine Falcon	50		

Rarities were:

Red-shouldered Hawk	3	Swainson's Hawk	7

Total for the season was 97,473 (second highest total; record was in 1993 with 148,615, which included 110,272 Broad-wingeds).

from the banding station which are included in the season composite totals. Many of the individual birds for November were also record totals.

I would like to thank Tim Dawson and Kim Eckert for reviewing the original manuscript, and Steve Millard for his assistance in its preparation. **Braddock Bay Raptor Research, 432 Manitou Beach Road, Hilton N.Y. 14468.**

Breeding Bird Composition and Species Relative Abundance Patterns on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Land in Western Minnesota

JoAnn M. Hanowski

Summary

Breeding birds were surveyed on 30 CRP sites in 12 western Minnesota counties in 1993 to document breeding bird species composition and relative abundance patterns. A total of 66 species were observed, 24 species were associated with shelterbelts or fencerow habitat. On average, 8 species/10 acres and 16 individuals/10 acres were counted on each site and six species the Clay-colored Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, American Goldfinch, Bobolink, Vesper Sparrow, and Common Yellowthroat were observed on two-thirds of the sites. The Bobolink was the most abundant species overall with a mean density of 2 pairs/10 acres. Three game species, Ring-necked Pheasant, Sharp-tailed Grouse, and Gray Partridge and two species of special concern in Minnesota, Upland Sandpiper and Short-eared Owl were also observed. Four species, Gray Partridge, Grasshopper Sparrow, Bobolink, and Western Meadowlark were observed in CRP fields and have declined

in this area of the state by more than 5%/year over the past 27 years (based on Breeding Bird Survey data). CRP is providing critical habitat for grassland breeding birds in the state and some form of its continuation past 1997 is recommended.

Introduction

There are currently 1.9 million acres of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land in Minnesota and over 35 million acres throughout the country. The Program, which began in 1985 has paid farmers to take highly erodible farmland out of production and convert it to grassland. The ten year contracts with farmers that were initiated from 1986 to 1988 are coming to an end. Continuation of the Program is uncertain, but it is likely that it will face scrutiny by Congress when the 1995 Farm Bill is negotiated.

A secondary objective of CRP was to enhance habitat for fish and wildlife populations. Several researchers have documented the importance of CRP lands as breeding habitat for a variety of game species, including ducks (Kantrud 1993), Ring-necked Pheasants (Berthelsen *et al.* 1990), and quail (Stauffer et al. 1989). Additionally, importance of CRP to non-game grassland birds that have been declining in numbers over the past 25 years in the northern Great Plains has been reported by Johnson and Schwartz (1993a, 1993b). Their survey included some CRP lands in Minnesota, but data were limited to Grant County. My objective was to document breeding bird species composition and relative abundance of CRP fields in western Minnesota.

Study Areas and Methods

CRP fields selected for the bird survey were either adjacent to hybrid poplar plantations that were surveyed for another project, or were within a twenty mile radius of these plantations (Figure 1). A total of 30 CRP fields in 12 Counties were chosen for study. No habitat or vegetation data were collected in the fields. Most CRP fields were previously row crops and were planted with native and non-native grasses when they were taken out of production. Because these sites are highly erodible, several had wet area within the field and some had borders (shelterbelts or fencerows) where trees and shrubs had been planted previously to control for soil erosion.

Each field was surveyed two times during the breeding season (late-May through late-June) using a line transect method. Non-overlapping transects (in terms of areas surveyed) were placed in the fields to survey the entire field, but in locations such that no birds were counted more than one time. Counts of birds were only conducted during the early morning hours (5:00 A.M. to 9:00 A.M.) on days with no precipitation and winds less than 15 mph. One observer conducted all counts. Because each field was a different size, rarefaction was used to standardize numbers of species and individuals that would be expected if a 10 acre field was surveyed (James and Rathbun 1981).

Route regression corrected trend data from 18 Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) routes in the Black Prairie Region of western Minnesota was acquired from the National Biological Service. Mean annual change in individual species numbers were calculated for species observed on these routes from 1966 to 1993. Trend data were used to identify species that have declined, remained the same, or increased in numbers over the past 27 years in this region of the State.

Results

A total of 66 species of birds were observed in 30 CRP sites (Table 1). Of these species, 24 were associated with either shelterbelts or fencerows that were found within the CRP site. On average, about 8 species/10 acres and 16 individuals/10 acres were observed (Table 1). Six species were found on over two-thirds of the sites including the Clay-colored Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, American Goldfinch, Bobolink, Vesper Sparrow, and Common Yellowthroat (Table 1). The Bobolink was the most abundant species overall with a mean

density of 2 pairs/10 acres. Four other species had relative abundance values greater than 1 pair/10 acres including the Red-winged Blackbird, Clay-colored Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, and Sedge Wren (Table 1). On the other extreme, 19 species were observed exclusively on one site. Many of these species were those associated with either trees or shrubs that occurred in shelterbelts or fencerows (e.g., Pine Siskin, Black-capped Chickadee, and Downy Woodpecker).

Three game species were observed within the fields including Ring-necked Pheasant (13% of fields), Sharp-tailed Grouse (7% of fields), and Gray Partridge (1 field) (Table 1). In addition, two species of special concern in Minnesota (Coffin and Pfannmuller 1988), Upland Sandpiper (2 sites) and Short-eared Owl (1 site) were observed. Other species that were listed as species of concern in the Midwest (Thompson et al. 1993) that were observed in the fields (or shelterbelts and fencerows) were; Great Crested Flycatcher, Bell's Vireo, Blue-winged Warbler, Dickcissel, Clay-colored Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Bobolink.

Based on route regression trend data from 18 BBS routes, 24 of the 38 species that were observed within CRP field habitat have declined over the past 27 years in this part of the State (Table 1). Most notably were four species, the Gray Partridge, Grasshopper Sparrow, Bobolink, and Western Meadowlark that have decreased on average over 5%/year (Table 1). In contrast, of species that occurred in fencerow or shelterbelt habitats, about half increased in abundance (12 species), and half decreased in abundance (10 species) over the past 27 years in the western part of Minnesota.

Discussion

Total number of breeding pairs that were observed within CRP sites in Minnesota were generally higher than observed by Johnson and Schwartz (1993a) in CRP fields throughout the Northern Great Plains. For example, on average about 15.7 pairs/10 acres were observed in this study compared to 4.3 pairs/10 acres on sites they surveyed in Grant County. In contrast, total number of species observed in this study on 30 sites was almost equal to the 73 species that they observed on over 300 sites (Johnson and Schwartz 1993a). The higher number of individuals counted in this study could be attributed to differences in counting methods, annual variation, or to site-specific differences in habitat or CRP practice. Counts here were likely higher because they included fencerow and shelterbelt habitats that were within boundaries of the CRP sites. These birds were included in the totals because this type of habitat is present on many CRP sites in western Minnesota and is thus, an important habitat feature of CRP sites.

On a species specific basis, the six most abundant species found by Johnson and Schwartz (1993a) in Grant County were the same six most abundant found in this survey throughout western Minnesota. Most abundant species were the Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Clay-colored Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Sedge Wren, and Common Yellowthroat. Without exception, overall densities of these species on fields surveyed here were higher than those reported for fields in Grant County (Johnson and Schwartz 1993a). However, they found higher numbers of Grasshopper Sparrows in Grant County than what was found in this study.

CRP fields six to eight years after establishment in this region of the State are providing critical habitat for grassland species that have declined in this region, for threatened species in Minnesota, as well as for game species that are of concern to local and regional hunting groups. Over 60% of the species that were observed on CRP sites in this study have declined in this region over the past 27 years. Reasons for declines are likely attributable to a variety of factors, but conversion of lands to crop-producing fields and fragmentation of grass-

Species	Mean	SE %	of 30 sites	BBS (%/year)
Total individuals	15.69	1.61	100	
Total no. species	8.16	0.46	100	
Northern Harrier	0.05	0.02	20	-1.39
Red-tailed Hawk	0.04	0.02	20	4.64
American Kestrel	0.03	0.02	10	2.10
Gray Partridge	0.02	0.02	3	-5.07
Ring-necked Pheasant	0.04	0.02	13	-1.75
Sharp-tailed Grouse	0.06	0.06	7	nc
Sora	0.02	0.02	7	-2.24
Sandhill Crane	0.01	0.01	7	nc
Killdeer	0.11	0.04	30	-0.23
Upland Sandpiper	0.05	0.03	7	-0.63
Mourning Dove	0.26	0.08	47	-1.02
Great Horned Owl*	0.01	0.01	3	-0.49
Short-eared Owl	0.00	0.00	3	-1.26
Chimney Swift	0.02	0.01	10	1.85
Red-headed Woodpecker*	0.01	0.01	7	-4.08
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker*	0.01	0.01	3	1.41
Downy Woodpecker*	0.01	0.01	3	3.40
Northern Flicker*	0.04	0.02	13	-4.41
Great Crested Flycatcher*	0.01	0.01	3	0.33
Western Kingbird	0.01	0.01	3	nc
Eastern Kingbird	0.11	0.04	30	-1.86
Horned Lark	0.02	0.02	7	0.82
Tree Swallow	0.44	0.15	40	2.09
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	0.04	0.03	7	-4.00
Cliff Swallow	0.13	0.08	17	9.44
Barn Swallow	0.42	0.09	63	1.11
Blue Jay*	0.04	0.02	17	2.58
American Crow*	0.19	0.08	30	2.23
Black-capped Chickadee*	0.00	0.00	3	8.58
House Wren*	0.02	0.02	7	-0.01
Sedge Wren	1.04	0.24	57	-2.61
Marsh Wren	0.02	0.02	3	-3.71
Eastern Bluebird	0.01	0.01	3	6.54
American Robin*	0.12	0.06	20	1.03
Gray Catbird*	0.05	0.02	13	1.28
Brown Thrasher*	0.01	0.01	3	-0.14
Cedar Waxwing*	0.16	0.09	13	7.43
European Starling*	0.04	0.02	10	-0.01
Bell's Vireo*	0.01	0.01	3	nc
Warbling Vireo*	0.01	0.01	3	-2.05
Blue-winged Warbler*	0.01	0.01	3	nc
Yellow Warbler*	0.06	0.05	7	-0.54
American Redstart*	0.02	0.02	3	1.58
Common Yellowthroat	0.64	0.13	67	0.29
Rose-breasted Grosbeak*	0.01	0.01	3	-0.03
Indigo Bunting*	0.10	0.06	10	-3.25
Dickcissel	0.05	0.05	3	-1.38
Chipping Sparrow*	0.04	0.03	10	0.77
Clay-colored Sparrow	1.53	0.22	93	-0.50
Field Sparrow	0.05	0.05	3	3.78
Vesper Sparrow	0.38	0.08	67	-2.51
Savannah Sparrow	1.42	0.26	90	-2.65
Grasshopper Sparrow	0.40	0.12	47	-7.22
Le Conte's Sparrow	0.10	0.04	27	2.84
Song Sparrow	0.34	0.08	47	-0.55
Swamp Sparrow	0.02	0.01	7	1.74
Bobolink	2.04	0.53	77	-5.70
Red-winged Blackbird	1.97	0.60	60	-0.24
Western Meadowlark	0.29	0.07	53	-6.60
Yellow-headed Blackbird	0.17	0.15	10	-0.39
Brewer's Blackbird	0.68	0.29	47	0.24
Common Grackle	0.52	0.28	27	-1.19
Brown-headed Cowbird	0.41	0.11	50	-2.78
Northern Oriole*	0.02	0.01	7	1.39
Pine Siskin*	0.03	0.03	3	nc
American Goldfinch	0.70	0.12	80	0.74

Table 1. Mean (ten acres), standard error, and percent of 30 CRP sites where individual breeding bird species were observed in 1993. Trend data from 18 Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) routes from the western portion of Minnesota from 1966 through 1993 are also presented. *denotes species that were observed in fencerows and shelterbelt habitats within the CRP site. Nc indicates that a trend was not calculated due to insufficient sample.

lands has been suggested as a major factor contributing to the declines (Herkert 1994).

As Johnson and Schwartz (1993b) suggest based on their analyses of vegetation, CRP does not restore native prairie habitat. However, it is encouraging that these sites support a diverse grassland bird community less than 10 years after they were taken out of production. Although it is difficult to predict what bird communities these sites will support in future years, as succession occurs, the bird species that occur within the fields will likely change (Johnson and Schwartz 1993a). The manner in which bird communities will change in the future will be affected by past (e.g., plant species planted), as well as future (e.g., burning) management practices on a site-specific basis. However, converting these fields back to row crops or to other land-use types will result in more dramatic changes to the existing bird community.

Based on the results of this and other studies that have documented breeding bird use of CRP fields, it is clear that the objectives of the program are currently being met. Soil erosion is being controlled on highly erodible farmland and suitable habitat was made available for both non-game and game breeding bird species. Although it is difficult to predict whether the Program will continue, some form of CRP continuation will likely continue to provide critical habitat for grassland breeding bird communities in the State.

Acknowledgments

Funding for this work was provided by the Department of Energy through North Central Experiment Station. I thank Cal Harth for conducting the bird censuses and Ann Lima for compiling the data. Breeding Bird Survey trend data was provided by National Biological Service in Patuxent, MD. This is contribution number 147 of the Center for Water and the Environment.

Literature Cited

Berthelsen, P. S., L. M. Smith, and R.R. George. 1990. Ring-necked Pheasant nesting ecology and production on CRP lands in the Texas Southern High Plains. Transactions of the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference 55: 46–56.

Coffin, B. and L. Pfannmuller. 1988. Minnesota's endangered flora and fauna. U of MN Press, Mpls, MN 474 pp.

Herkert, J. R. 1994. The effects of habitat fragmentation on Midwestern grassland bird communities. Ecological Applications 4: 461–471.

James, F. C. and N. Rathbun. 1981. Rarefaction, relative abundance, and diversity of avian communities. Auk 98: 785–800.

Johnson, D. H. and M. D. Schwartz. 1993a. The conservation reserve program: habitat for grassland birds. Great Plains Research 3: 273–295.

Johnson, D. H. and M. D. Schwartz. 1993b. The conservation reserve program and grassland birds. Conservation Biology 7: 934–937.

Kantrud, H. A. 1993. Duck nest success in Conservation Reserve Program land in the Prairie Pothole Region. Journal of Soil and Water Conservation 43: 238–242.

Stauffer, D. F., G. A. Cline and M. J. Tonkovich. 1989. Evaluating potential effects of CRP on Bobwhite Quail in Piedmont Virginia. Transactions of the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference 55: 57–67.

Thompson, F. R., S. J. Lewis, J. Green, and D. Ewert. 1993. Status of neotropical migrant landbirds in the Midwest: identifying species of management concern. pp.145–158 *In:* D. M. Finch and P. W. Stangel (eds.) Status and management of neotropical migratory birds. U.S.D.A. Forest Service Gen. Tech. Rpt. RM-229.

Center for Water and the Environment, Natural Resource Research Institute, 5013 Miller Trunk Hwy., Duluth, MN 55811.

Prothonotary Warbler, 4 July 1994, Nine Mile Creek, Hennepin County. Photo by Scott Krych.

The Summer Season
1 June to 31 July 1994

Terry Wiens

Certainly the most noteworthy sighting for the season was the first state record **Crested Caracara** observed briefly in Scott County on 18 July. The bird was very well documented; of question is only its origin (see ***The Loon*** 67:59–61). One other accidental species was documented this summer when a **Magnificent Hummingbird** was photographed in Kanabec County in mid-July. This species was first documented in the state in 1987. Unlike many recent years, the summer of 1994 could almost be characterized as "normal". Statewide the temperatures and the rainfall were relatively close to what one might expect, especially compared to the cool and wet summer of 1993. The usual number of species was reported, including one new state record. A suprisingly large number of species appeared to be less numerous, especially waterbirds and a variety of songbirds. On the other hand, most shorebirds and warblers were fairly well represented.

No fewer than 112 observers submitted seasonal reports and/or breeding information for the summer. A total of 267 species was observed, very close to the previous ten-year average of 266. Contributors sent in 1,055 nest or brood cards, nearly as many as the record years of 1985 and 1986. Excellent work!

Breeding information is always useful, and nest or brood cards that provide enough details to confirm breeding are especially valuable. Breeding data were collected for 162 species, roughly the average number for the past ten years. Special thanks go to the members of the Hiawatha Valley Audubon (HVA) Nesting Project: Margaret Boller, Marian and Walt Carroll, Dawn Hinebaugh, Florence Holzingworth, Anah and Howard Munson, Carol Schumacher, and Rick Swanson. The HVA volunteers contributed 162 nest/brood cards from Winona, Fillmore, and Wabasha counties. Other top contributors of breeding information included Jennifer Pospichal (161), Jean Segerstrom/Mark Newstrom (158), William Longley (61), and Steve & Diane Millard (54). As always, a hearty thanks to all contributors for your excellent efforts. Each sighting and breeding record is important — keep up the good work!

Four casual species were reported this season; **Clark's Grebes** were found nesting in Faribault County, two immature ***Plegadis sp.*** were observed in Big Stone County, a single **Sprague's Pipit** was discovered in the tall grass prairie within Clay County, and the very cooperative male **Yellow-throated Warbler** (see Spring Seasonal Report) remained on territory in Kandiyohi County.

Other interesting observations included **Snow Geese** at five separate locations (one or more Snow Geese have lingered in the state almost every summer in recent years); a late migrant **Greater Scaup** found during early June in Pennington County and an early migrant at 40th Ave. west in Duluth; a **Harlequin Duck** spending the entire summer in Minneapolis (very peculiar behavior if this bird was wild!); a sorry-looking **Rough-legged Hawk** hunting hay fields in Winona County for a couple of days in mid-June; a **Townsend's Solitaire** in Cook County (the first summer record for the state — normally solitaires are observed in the fall and winter); an immature **Summer Tanager** in Rock County, which ironically is the first summer record in ten years; **Pine Grosbeaks** reported in mid-summer at two locations in the bogs of Lake of the Woods County (only one other summer record exists for this species); and a **Common Redpoll** at a feeder into early June in Otter Tail County, the latest date ever recorded.

Some breeding records of note include the two new nesting colonies of **American White Pelicans** discovered in Faribault and Pope counties. For many years the only breeding sites known for this species have been at Marsh Lake in Lac Qui Parle County, and at Lake of the Woods. Reintroduced **Trumpeter Swans**, although not on the "wild" list yet, have taken another small step forward by nesting in Aitkin County. A remarkable concentration of nesting **Red-shouldered Hawks** was well documented by survey personnel within Camp Ripley in Morrison County; birders should note that Camp Ripley is open to visitors under certain conditions (see ***The Loon*** 66:117–126). Probable breeding of **Northern Bobwhites** occurred in Houston County, the only county within Minnesota where there has been any notable occurrence of wild bobwhites. **Three-toed Woodpeckers** nested in northern St. Louis County; the number of documented nest records for this elusive species can be counted on one hand. Last but not least, the first confirmed breeding record in the State for **Kentucky Warbler** was well-documented in Nicollet County.

Of concern this summer was the unusually large number of species for which reports declined. No fewer than 60 species were observed in significantly fewer counties than in recent years. In contrast, only ten species had a significant increase. It is not clear how much of this was due to changes in observer coverage; although the number of observers remained about the same as usual, it appeared that many travelled to fewer counties than in the past. It is always very difficult to standardize observer effort for seasonal reports, and for this reason apparent changes in range or

abundance should be viewed with extreme caution. Having said that, the decline for some species was still very alarming. For example, the number of counties reported for **Northern Pintail**, **Northern Shoveler**, **Gray Partridge**, **Wilson's Phalarope**, **Grasshopper Sparrow**, and **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was less than 60% of the previous ten-year average. An additional 25 species were observed in fewer counties than in the previous ten or more years. There were isolated exceptions; **Cattle Egrets** were observed in at least seven counties, **Cerulean Warbler** reports were way up and extended beyond their usual range, and **Prothonotary Warblers** appeared to be more numerous.

A small number of species were notably absent this summer. Perhaps most disturbing was the lack of any reports of **Henslow's Sparrows**. In recent years a scattered few could still be found primarily in the southeastern region of the state, especially at O.L. Kipp State Park in Winona County. Unfortunately, like many other prairie inhabitants, their status has become questionable. This species is easily overlooked; birders are encouraged to listen carefully when visiting suitable pastures and grasslands! Another species that has become scarce as a breeder is the **Yellow-breasted Chat**, formerly a rare nester in extreme southeast Minnesota but now unreported for the past six summers. **Boreal Owls** were not reported for the third consecutive summer (although they are regularly found during spring censuses). Very unusual was the lack of **American Avocet** sightings; this species had been observed in all of the previous 13 summers. Other missing species that have been reported in seven or more of the past ten summers were **Snowy Egret**, **Tundra Swan**(!), **Whimbrel**, and **Red-necked Phalarope**.

The format for the species accounts is the same as used in the past. The key to the seasonal reports is located below. Breeding records are classified based on the criteria found in ***The Loon*** 58:22 or in *Minnesota Birds*, p. 7 (Green and Janssen 1975). 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 and 57:15–34). Divisions of the state into regions (e.g. west central, southeast) are based on those delineated in *Birds in Minnesota*, p. 25 (Janssen 1987).

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 for his assistance in preparing this report.

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 bold **(10/9)** indicate an occurrence either earlier, later or within the earliest or latest dates on file.
3. Counties listed in bold **(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.

The Season publishes reports of bird sightings from 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, request a report form from the Editor of *The Season*, Peder Svingen, 2602 E. 4th St, Duluth, MN 55812.

Common Loon, 2 June 1994, North Long Lake, Crow Wing Co. Photo by Jean Segerstrom.

Common Loon
Nesting reported from Cass, Crow Wing, Aitkin, Morrison, and *Kanabec* CM; probable nesting in Steele (Rice Lake S.P., *fide* JB), Becker, Otter Tail, Kandiyohi counties. Seen in 23 additional counties as far south as Murray and Winona counties.

Pied-billed Grebe
Nested in ten counties including *Grant* SDM; probable nesting in four. Seen in 18 other counties in all regions except northeast.

Horned Grebe
Only report from Marshall.

Red-necked Grebe
Nested in Clearwater, Otter Tail, Douglas, Crow Wing, St. Louis counties; probable breeding in Becker, Grant, Cass, Kandiyohi counties. Observed in 11 other counties in all regions of the state except in the southwest and southeast.

Eared Grebe
Fewest reports since 1987. Probable breeding at Camp Ripley in Morrison County SM (***The Loon*** 66:118) and in Marshall, Big Stone counties. Also seen in Hennepin (WM, DJe), Roseau, Pennington, Lac Qui Parle, and Redwood counties.

Western Grebe
More reports than usual. Nested in Big Stone, Douglas, Hennepin; probable breeding in 11 counties. Observed in eight additional counties as far east as Roseau, Todd in the north and Rice in the south.

CLARK'S GREBE
Nested at Minnesota Lake in *Faribault* RJ, AH *et al.* (***The Loon*** 66:208); this species has been reported for four consecutive summers and may prove to be regular in the state.

American White Pelican
Fewer reports than in past three years. Despite this, two new colonies were discovered; one at Minnesota Lake in *Faribault* BF (***The Loon*** 66:111–112) and another at Lake Johanna in *Pope* NH (***The Loon*** 66:112–113). Probable breeding in Lac Qui Parle; seen in 29 additional counties statewide.

Double-crested Cormorant
Nested in Pope, Faribault; probable breeding in six other counties. Observed in 30 additional counties statewide.

American Bittern
Fewest reports in 14 years. Nested in *Morrison* SM; seen in 13 other counties as far south as a line through Lyon, McLeod, Anoka.

Great Blue Heron rookery, 2 July 1994, Gull Lake, Cass Co. Photo by Jean Segerstrom.

Least Bittern
Probable breeding in Hennepin; also seen in Roseau, Marshall, Otter Tail, Lac Qui Parle, Sherburne, Anoka.

Great Blue Heron
Nested in Cass, Pope, Faribault; probable breeding in 13 counties. Observed in 42 additional counties throughout state.

Great Egret
Nested in Pope and Faribault counties; probable nesting in Kandiyohi, Meeker. Seen in 18 additional southern counties plus Kanabec, Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail, **Kittson** (the first record for this county).

Cattle Egret
Many reports, similar to last year. Probable breeding in Lac Qui Parle, Kandiyohi; also groups of four or fewer birds observed in Otter Tail, Grant, Big Stone, Cottonwood, Nobles.

Green Heron
Nested in *Douglas* SWa, Otter Tail; seen in 34 other counties as far north as Marshall in west and St. Louis in east.

Black-crowned Night-Heron
Nested in Faribault, Yellow Medicine, Pope, *Otter Tail* SDM; probable nesting in Big Stone, Lac Qui Parle, Kandiyohi. Seen in nine other southern counties plus Grant, Douglas, Marshall, Beltrami (7/26, DJo).

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron
Only report on 6/13 from Edina in Hennepin Co. (*fide* PB).

IBIS species?
Two immmature birds observed near Thielke L. in Big Stone Co. on 7/23 (AH, mob).

[TRUMPETER SWAN]
Nested in *Aitkin* (Moose-Willow WMA; 2

young) WN; also observed in Sherburne County (Sherburne NWR), and in Carver (Carver Park) County.

Snow Goose
Most reports since 1989. Observed 6/1 Rock ND; 6/5 Dakota DS; 6/29 Cook OSL; 6/25–7/12 Rice TB, FKS; 7/21–31 Cottonwood ED.

Canada Goose
Nested in ten counties including *Faribault* MS; probable nesting in 12. Observed in 25 additional counties statewide.

Wood Duck
Nested in 12 counties, probable breeding in eight; seen in 27 other counties throughout state.

Green-winged Teal
Observed in 12 counties scattered throughout the state.

American Black Duck
Fewer reports than usual; seen in Roseau, Koochiching, St. Louis, Cook.

Mallard
Fewest reports since 1984. Nested in 22 counties including *Watonwan* MS, *Blue Earth* LF, RJ; probable breeding in six. Observed in 17 other counties statewide.

Northern Pintail
Half the usual number of reports; seen in Roseau, Marshall, Otter Tail, Lyon, Faribault.

Blue-winged Teal
Fewest reports in over ten years. Nested in seven counties including *Grant* SDM; probable nesting in Lac Qui Parle, Kandiyohi, Blue Earth. Seen in 20 other counties statewide.

Northern Shoveler
Fewer than half the usual number of reports than in recent years. Observed in Roseau, Marshall, Polk, Otter Tail, Aitkin, Meeker, Lyon, and Blue Earth counties.

Gadwall
Reported in 11 counties in all regions except central.

American Wigeon
Nested in Aitkin; also seen in Marshall, Roseau, Koochiching, St. Louis, Lake, Otter Tail, Lyon.

Canvasback
Nested in Otter Tail; probable nesting in Grant, Kandiyohi; also observed in Roseau, Marshall, Mahnomen, Big Stone, Lac Qui Parle, Lyon, Hennepin.

Redhead
Fewer reports than past four years. Nested in *Otter Tail* SDM, probable nesting in Hennepin; seen in nine additional western counties plus Kandiyohi, Watonwan, Faribault.

Ring-necked Duck
Nested in *Otter Tail* SDM, Marshall, Crow Wing, Kanabec, Anoka; probable nesting in Becker, Kandiyohi. Seen in 13 other counties in all regions except southeast.

Greater Scaup
Late migrant(?) male on **6/18** at Thief River Falls sewage ponds, Pennington Co. DJo; female in Duluth on **7/23–24**, St. Louis Co. KE, MH.

Lesser Scaup
Reported in Roseau, Marshall, Pennington, Mahnomen, Koochiching, Lake, Lyon, Hennepin, Dakota.

Harlequin Duck
Second summer record in past four years. Single male, originally discovered on 4/16 (***The Loon*** 66:175), observed throughout period at St. Anthony Falls in Hennepin Co. mob. Origin questionable.

White-winged Scoter
Late migrant 6/4 Cook *fide* PBa.

Common Goldeneye
Nested in Cass, Lake; probable nesting

in Roseau, Lake of the Woods, Becker, St. Louis, Cook. Also seen in Beltrami, Koochiching, Aitkin.

Bufflehead
Observed in St. Louis, Lake; plus 6/9,23 **Rice** TB.

Hooded Merganser
Nested in *Pope* SDM, *Kanabec* CM, Aitkin, Dakota, Winona; probable nesting in Roseau, St. Louis, Becker, Anoka. Seen in ten other counties in all regions except southwest.

Common Merganser
Only reports from St. Louis, Lake, and Cook.

Red-breasted Merganser
Observed in St. Louis, Lake, Cook.

Ruddy Duck
Fewest reports since 1988. Nested in *Otter Tail* SDM, Murray; probable nesting in Big Stone, Faribault. Seen in seven additional western counties plus Kandiyohi, Watonwan, Blue Earth, Hennepin, Rice.

Turkey Vulture
Reported in 38 counties (a record high) from all regions; this species appears to have established itself virtually statewide.

Osprey
Nested in seven counties including *Morrison* SM; probable nesting in Itasca, Kandiyohi. Seen in seven other northern counties as far west as Becker, plus Sherburne, Chisago, Washington, Ramsey, Carver, Rice.

Bald Eagle
Southern records continue to increase. Nested in Becker, Otter Tail, Crow Wing, Aitkin, *Morrison* SM; probable nesting in St. Louis, Sherburne, Kandiyohi, Lyon. Seen in ten additional northern counties plus Chisago, Anoka, Washington, Rice, Houston.

Northern Harrier
Nested in *Wabasha* ML; probable nesting in Marshall. Seen in 30 other counties throughout state.

Sharp-shinned Hawk
Reported in Polk, Cass, Aitkin, St. Louis, Lake, Cook; late migrant 6/4 Hennepin.

Cooper's Hawk
Nested in Otter Tail, Anoka; probable nesting in Kandiyohi. Seen in 15 other counties in all regions.

Northern Goshawk
Reported in St. Louis, Cook.

Red-shouldered Hawk
Nested in *Morrison* SM, where **16** nests were found at Camp Ripley, possibly the highest concentration ever recorded for the state (***The Loon*** 66:122); also nested in Anoka. Seen in Otter Tail, Aitkin, Hennepin, Washington, Scott, Dakota, Goodhue.

Broad-winged Hawk
Nested in Lake; probable nesting in Cass, Crow Wing, Kandiyohi. Observed in 19 other counties within usual range.

Swainson's Hawk
Nested in Lac Qui Parle; also seen in Otter Tail, Traverse, Big Stone, Murray, Washington, Dakota, Rice, Goodhue, Dodge, Mower.

Red-tailed Hawk
Fewer reports than usual. Nested in *Chisago* JS/MN, *Goodhue* JS/MN, Hennepin, Carver; probable nesting in Kandiyohi. Seen in 40 other counties statewide.

Rough-legged Hawk
One tattered individual observed 6/15,16 in Winona JPo. This species has now been reported for four consecutive summers.

CRESTED CARACARA
One well-documented individual was

discovered on 7/18 along a highway in Scott Co. RG. This represents the first record for the state (***The Loon*** 67:59–61). Of interest was the second provincial record of a Caracara on 7/6 at Point Pelee in Ontario (***Am. Birds*** 48:939).

American Kestrel
Fewest reports in over ten years. Nested in *Otter Tail* SDM, Aitkin; probable nesting in Kandiyohi, Isanti. Seen in 40 additional counties statewide.

Merlin
Nested in St. Louis County, probable nesting in Lake; also seen in Koochiching, Cook.

Peregrine Falcon
Nested in St. Louis; also observed in Hennepin, Ramsey, Dakota, Rice, Brown, 6/12 Marshall SKS.

Gray Partridge
Number of reports has dropped almost **threefold** since 1989. Nested in Winona, probable nesting in Houston; also observed in Otter Tail, Lac Qui Parle, Lyon, Rock, Murray, Cottonwood, Rice, Goodhue, Olmsted.

Ring-necked Pheasant
Fewest reports in over ten years. Nested in *Blue Earth* LF, Isanti; probable nesting in Kandiyohi, Winona. Seen in 19 additional southern counties plus Otter Tail, Douglas.

Spruce Grouse
Only reports: nested in Lake of the Woods, probable nesting in Lake.

Ruffed Grouse
Number of reports still relatively low (as expected at this stage of cycle). Nested in *Winona* HVA, JPo; probable nesting in Cass, Kandiyohi. Seen in nine additional northern counties plus Hennepin, Anoka, Washington.

Greater Prairie-Chicken
Only report from Wilkin.

Sharp-tailed Grouse
Observed in Roseau, Marshall, Koochiching, Aitkin, St. Louis.

Wild Turkey
Nested in Winona and seen in Houston, Olmsted, Goodhue, Rice; also reported in Anoka, Kandiyohi (? status).

Northern Bobwhite
First summer report in three years; probable nesting in Houston CS.

Yellow Rail
Observed at traditional McGregor Marsh area in Aitkin Co.; also present at same Sax-Zim bog site in St. Louis Co as last year (see ***The Loon*** 65:196–199), and at sites discovered in 1992 within Morrison Co. (***The Loon*** 66:117–126).

Virginia Rail
Fewer reports than usual. Nested in Anoka; probable nesting in Hennepin, Blue Earth. Also seen in Roseau, Otter Tail, Aitkin, St. Louis, Kandiyohi, Lyon, Martin, Winona.

Sora
By far the fewest reports in over ten years. Seen in 19 counties in all regions except northeast and south central.

Common Moorhen
Nested in Anoka, probable nesting in Houston; also seen in Hennepin, Blue Earth, Faribault.

American Coot
Fewest reports in ten+ years, and less than half that of last year. Nested in Otter Tail, Hennepin, Lac Qui Parle, Redwood; probable nesting in Marshall, Blue Earth. Observed in 12 additional counties in all regions except northeast and southeast.

Sandhill Crane
Many reports, similar to past two years. Nested in *Becker* BB, *Washington* RHo; probable nesting in Anoka, **Wabasha** ML, **Houston** FL, **Pope** *fide* JSc. Also

observed in Roseau, Marshall, Pennington, Red Lake, Aitkin, Kanabec, Sherburne, 6/8 Lake.

Black-bellied Plover
Only report: 6/4 Roseau.

American Golden-Plover
Only observation: 6/4 Roseau.

Semipalmated Plover
Observed in seven counties; late migrant 6/4 Roseau, early migrant 7/16 Sherburne.

Piping Plover
Probable nesting at traditional site in Lake of the Woods.

Killdeer
Fewest reports in ten+ years. Nested in eight counties including *Grant* SDM; probable nesting in Mille Lacs, Kandiyohi. Seen in 32 additional counties statewide.

Greater Yellowlegs
Reported from 13 counties; late spring 6/4 Roseau, early fall 7/5 Anoka.

Lesser Yellowlegs
Seen in 22 counties; late spring 6/4 Roseau, early fall 7/1 Anoka.

Solitary Sandpiper
Observed in St. Louis, Aitkin; fall migrants seen throughout July in 15 counties south of known breeding range.

Willet
Two reports: early migrant(?) **7/5** Anoka *fide* PBa, plus 7/31 Kandiyohi.

Spotted Sandpiper
Seen in 32 counties throughout the state.

Upland Sandpiper
Decline in reports continues; number of counties observed in is only half that of 1988. Nested in *Murray* (name illegible); seen in eight other western counties plus St. Louis, Morrison, Kandiyohi, Le Sueur, **Waseca**.

Hudsonian Godwit
Only report; late migrant **6/14** St. Louis *fide* KE.

Marbled Godwit
Nested near Eagle Lake in ***McLeod*** MS; also observed in Roseau, Lake of the Woods, Red Lake, Norman, Wilkin, Otter Tail, Stearns.

Ruddy Turnstone
Only reports: late migrants 6/1 Grant and Anoka.

Red Knot
Single late migrant 6/6 St. Louis (Park Point) DPV.

Sanderling
All reports: late migrant 6/6 St. Louis, early migrants 7/23 Winona, 7/28 Carver.

Semipalmated Sandpiper
Seen in 13 counties; late migrant 6/5 Cottonwood, early migrant 7/16 Rock and Faribault.

Least Sandpiper
Observed in 20 counties; late migrant 6/13 Anoka, early migrants 7/2 Koochiching, Anoka, and Scott.

White-rumped Sandpiper
Only reports: 6/4 Roseau, 6/5 Cottonwood.

Baird's Sandpiper
Seen in six counties; late migrant 6/5 Cottonwood, early migrant 7/19 Lake.

Pectoral Sandpiper
Observed in 17 counties; late migrant 6/4 Roseau, early migrant **6/28** Anoka *fide* PBa.

Dunlin
Only record: 6/1 Anoka.

Stilt Sandpiper
Seen in eight counties; late migrant 6/4

Roseau, early migrant 7/9 Anoka.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper
Only records: 7/24 Clay, 7/31 St. Louis.

Short-billed Dowitcher
Fall migrants reported in six counties including early migrant 7/2 Anoka.

Common Snipe
Nested in *Pennington* MM; seen in 18 additional counties as far south as Lac Qui Parle, Kandiyohi, Hennepin.

American Woodcock
Nested in *Waseca* JZ; probable nesting in Kandiyohi, Mower. Seen in 13 other counties in all regions except southwest.

Wilson's Phalarope
Very few reports (less than half the previous ten-year average). Seen in Roseau, Wilkin, Big Stone; plus 6/20 **St. Louis** *fide* KE and 7/9 **Winona** CS.

Franklin's Gull
Most reports in ten+ years. Seen in 13 western counties plus Lake of the Woods, St. Louis, Kandiyohi, McLeod, Brown, Goodhue, Freeborn.

Bonaparte's Gull
Only reports: 7/22 Beltrami, 6/22 Anoka *fide* PBa.

Ring-billed Gull
Probable nesting in Lac Qui Parle; seen in 38 additional counties statewide.

Herring Gull
Probable nesting in Roseau; observed in 12 other counties as far south as Cottonwood, Winona.

Caspian Tern
Fewest reports since 1988. Observed in Roseau, St. Louis, Crow Wing, Hennepin, Ramsey.

Common Tern
Probable nesting in Lake of the Woods; also observed in Roseau, St. Louis, Lake.

Forster's Tern
Nested in *Otter Tail* SDM, *Washington* WL, Marshall, Nicollet; probable breeding in Grant, Hennepin, Faribault. Seen in 19 additional counties as far east as Clearwater in the north and Winona in the south.

Black Tern
Fewest reports since 1984. Nested in *Otter Tail* SDM, Marshall, Hennepin; probable nesting in Becker, Kandiyohi, Anoka, Carver. Seen in 30 other counties in all regions except northeast.

Rock Dove
Fewer reports than usual. Nested in Winona, probable nesting in Kandiyohi; seen in 36 additional counties statewide.

Mourning Dove
Nested in Wilkin, Otter Tail, Kanabec, Winona; probable nesting in Cass, Kandiyohi, Dakota. Observed in 43 additional counties throughout state.

Black-billed Cuckoo
Nested in *Olmsted* JB, Winona; probable nesting in Becker, Cass. Seen in 28 other counties statewide.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Only reported in 11 southern counties (less than half the number reported in 1990).

Eastern Screech-Owl
Probable nesting in Hennepin; also observed in Anoka, Murray.

Great Horned Owl
Fewest reports in ten+ years. Nested in *Otter Tail* SDM, *Winona* HVA, Aitkin; probable nesting in Lake of the Woods, Kandiyohi. Seen in 15 additional counties in all regions except northwest and south central.

Barred Owl
Nested in *Nicollet* LF; probable nesting in Kandiyohi, Anoka. Seen in 14 other counties in all regions except west cen-

Young Long-eared Owl, 6 June 1994, Aitkin County. Photo by Warren Nelson.

tral and southwest.

Great Gray Owl
Nested in Aitkin; also observed in Roseau, St. Louis, Lake, Carlton.

Long-eared Owl
Only report: nested in Aitkin.

Short-eared Owl
Observed in Sax-Zim Bog area in St. Louis Co. TDw, at three locations in Roseau Co. PS/SB, and in Espelie Valley in Marshall Co. SKS.

Northern Saw-whet Owl
Only reports from Lake, Cass.

Common Nighthawk
Nested in St. Louis; seen in 29 additional counties statewide.

Whip-poor-will
Observed in Roseau, Lake of the Woods, St. Louis, Cook, Kanabec, Goochue, Winona, Houston.

Chimney Swift
Fewest reports since 1985. Probable nesting in Lyon; seen in 36 other counties statewide.

MAGNIFICENT HUMMINGBIRD
Third state record (all summer); one female was photographed at Arne Lake, Kanabec Co. on 7/16 (***The Loon*** 67:57).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Nested in *Grant* SDM, Clearwater; probable nesting in Becker, Crow Wing, Scott, Rice. Seen in 29 other counties statewide.

Belted Kingfisher
Fewest reports since 1984. Probable nesting in Nicollet; observed in 36 additional counties throughout state.

Red-headed Woodpecker
Fewest reports in ten+ years. Nested in Aitkin, Winona; probable nesting in Otter Tail, Anoka. Seen in 23 other southern counties plus Douglas, Todd, Kanabec, Roseau.

Red-bellied Woodpecker
Nested in Brown, Winona; probable breeding in Becker BB, Otter Tail, Anoka, Dakota, Nicollet. Seen in 12 additional southern counties plus Grant, Aitkin, Pine.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Nested in seven counties including *Becker* BB, *Douglas* SWa; probable nesting in Cass, Aitkin, St. Louis. Observed in 20 other counties in all regions except southwest.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 2 July 1994, West Twin Lake, Crow Wing County. Photo by Jean Segerstrom.

Downy Woodpecker
Fewest reports since 1985. Nested in six counties including *Becker* RHu; probable breeding in six. Seen in 28 additional counties statewide.

Hairy Woodpecker
Nested in Brown; probable nesting in eight counties. Observed in 26 other

counties throughout state.

Three-toed Woodpecker
Nested along High Lake Rd. in St. Louis Co. SS (there is only a handful of nesting records for the state); also one female observed 6/25–7/7 along Spruce Rd. in Lake Co. KE *et al.*

Black-backed Woodpecker
Seen in Hubbard, St. Louis, Lake, Cook.

Northern Flicker
Nested in Anoka, Winona; probable nesting in St. Louis, Crow Wing, Hennepin. Seen in 43 additional counties statewide.

Pileated Woodpecker
Nested in *Winona* JPo, Crow Wing; probable nesting in St. Louis, Kandiyohi, Anoka, Ramsey. Observed in 23 other counties in all regions except southwest.

Olive-sided Flycatcher
Seen in Roseau, Aitkin, St. Louis, Lake, Cook. Late migrants 6/1 Brown, 6/4–5 Hennepin, 6/11–13 Otter Tail, Kandiyohi (no date); early migrant **7/28** Anoka *fide* PBa.

Eastern Wood-Pewee
Nested in *Douglas* SWa, *Winona* JPo, St. Louis; probable nesting in Cass, Washington. Observed in 38 additional counties statewide.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
Reported in Roseau, Koochiching, Hubbard, Aitkin, St. Louis, Cook; plus late migrant 6/2 Brown.

Acadian Flycatcher
Many reports, similar to 1992. Nesting confirmed at three locations: Elm Creek Park Reserve in *Hennepin* Co. OJ; Cannon River Wilderness in Rice Co. TB, GB; and an undisclosed location in *Winona* Co. HVA. Also observed at Beaver Creek Valley S.P. in Houston Co. (three birds); Seven Mile Creek County Park in Nicollet Co.; Murphy-Hanrahan Park Reserve (one male each in Scott and Dakota Co.); and Monson Lake S.P. in **Swift** Co. (6/10 RG, RF).

Alder Flycatcher
Probable nesting in Cass. Seen in 18 additional counties as far south as Otter Tail in the west and Washington in the east; plus late migrants 6/2 Rice, 6/3 Dodge, 6/5 Dakota, 6/6 Kandiyohi.

Willow Flycatcher
Nested in *Anoka* WL. Seen in 14 other counties as far north as a line through Clay, Washington; plus a singing bird on 6/5 near **Orr** in St. Louis Co. RHo.

Least Flycatcher
Nested in *Winona* HVA; probable nesting in Cass. Observed in 33 additional counties statewide.

Eastern Phoebe
Fewest reports since 1985. Nested in eight counties; probable nesting in five; seen in 24 other counties throughout state.

Great Crested Flycatcher
Fewest reports in ten+ years. Nested in *Otter Tail* SDM, Clearwater, Brown; probable nesting in seven counties. Observed in 30 additional counties statewide.

Western Kingbird
Decline in reports for second consecutive year. Nested in *Wilkin* SDM, Pipestone, Washington; seen in nine other western counties plus Hennepin.

Eastern Kingbird
Nested in six counties including *Wilkin* SDM, *Grant* SDM; probable nesting in three. Observed in 46 other counties statewide.

Horned Lark
Fewest reports in ten+ years. Nested in Clay, *Winona* HVA, JPo; probable nesting in Pennington, Morrison. Seen in 25 additional counties in all regions, includ-

ing Cook in northeast.

Purple Martin
Reports down considerably; number of counties with observations is half that of 1988. Nested in *Wabasha* (***The Loon*** 66:215), Washington; probable nesting in Otter Tail, Cass, Crow Wing, Kandiyohi. Seen in 23 other counties throughout state.

Tree Swallow
Number of reports well below average. Nested in eight counties, probable nesting in three; seen in 29 additional counties statewide.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Nested in *Winona* JPo, Aitkin; probable nesting in Crow Wing, Kandiyohi, Fillmore. Observed in 24 other counties in all regions.

Bank Swallow
Fewer reports than usual, for second consecutive year. Nested in Aitkin, Anoka, Winona; probable nesting in Kanabec, Kandiyohi, Goodhue. Seen in 21 additional counties statewide.

Cliff Swallow
Probable breeding in nine counties; seen in 35 other counties throughout state.

Barn Swallow
Fewest reports in ten+ years. Nested in four counties, probable nesting in five. Seen in 39 additional counties statewide.

Gray Jay
Nested in St. Louis, probable nesting in Lake; also seen in Roseau, Beltrami, Koochiching, Aitkin, Cook.

Blue Jay
Nested in Crow Wing, Winona; probable breeding in six counties. Observed in 39 other counties statewide.

Black-billed Magpie
Nested in Aikin; also observed in Roseau, Marshall, Pennington, Lake of the Woods, Beltrami.

American Crow
Nested in Anoka; probable nesting in Becker, Crow Wing, Kandiyohi, Dakota. Seen in 43 other counties statewide.

Common Raven
Seen in 15 northern counties as far south and west as a line through Marshall, Hubbard, Pine; plus Anoka and 6/5 Washington (Stillwater) RB.

Black-capped Chickadee
Fewer reports than average. Nested in three counties, probable nesting in seven; seen in 32 additional counties statewide.

Boreal Chickadee
Reported in Koochiching, St. Louis, Lake, Aitkin.

Tufted Titmouse
Only report from Houston.

Red-breasted Nuthatch
Seen in eight counties in north central and northeast; plus Roseau, Hennepin, Dakota.

White-breasted Nuthatch
Nested in Pennington, Crow Wing; probable nesting in Marshall. Seen in 36 additional counties throughout state.

Brown Creeper
Probable breeding in St. Louis; also observed in Roseau, Clearwater, Itasca, Brown, Dakota, Winona.

House Wren
Number of reports well below average. Nested in seven counties, probable nesting in seven; seen in 30 additional counties statewide.

Winter Wren
Nested in Aitkin, probable nesting in Cook; seen in seven other north central and northeast counties plus Becker, Anoka.

Sedge Wren
Observed in 33 counties statewide.

Marsh Wren
Probable nesting in Cottonwood, Watonwan; seen in 26 other counties in all regions except northeast.

Golden-crowned Kinglet
Reported in Becker, Koochiching, Aitkin, St. Louis, Lake, Cook.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Observed in Roseau, Becker, Beltrami, Koochiching, Aitkin, St. Louis, Lake, Cook.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Nested in *Grant* SDM, Anoka, Brown, Winona; probable nesting in Blue Earth. Also reported in Swift, Kandiyohi, Nicollet, Hennepin, Ramsey, Washington, Scott, Dakota, Rice, Olmsted, Houston.

Eastern Bluebird
Fewest reports since 1985. Nested in 12 counties, probable nesting in seven; seen in 24 additional counties statewide. (An Eastern/Mountain Bluebird hybrid male was observed on 6/5 in Todd Co. SDM.)

Townsend's Solitaire
First summer record; single bird observed on **6/22** along Lima Mt. Road in Cook Co. *fide* KE (***The Loon*** 67:62).

Veery
Nested in *Becker* RHu, *Anoka* WM; probable nesting in Cass, Crow Wing. Seen in 28 other counties in all regions except southwest.

Swainson's Thrush
Reported in Roseau, Koochiching, St. Louis, Cook; plus late migrant 6/5 Hennepin and early migrant(?) **7/10–11** Hennepin SC, *fide* PBa.

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

Wood Thrush
Nested in *Winona* HVA, JPo. Seen in 16 other counties ranging from Houston to Cook in the east, as far west as Brown along the Minnesota River, and as far west as Becker, Clearwater in the north; plus probable late migrant 6/1 Douglas.

American Robin
Fewer reports than usual. Nested in ten counties including *Kanabec* CM; probable nesting in eight. Seen in 28 other counties statewide.

Gray Catbird
Fewest reports since 1985. Nested in seven counties including *Douglas* SWa; probable nesting in Becker, Cass, Kandiyohi. Observed in 33 additional counties throughout state.

Northern Mockingbird
Three reports of single birds: 6/7,10 St. Louis (Park Point) *fide* KE and PBa; 6/17 Wilkin SDM; 7/8 Aitkin WN.

Brown Thrasher
Fewest reports in ten+ years. Nested in Aitkin, Winona; probable nesting in Crow Wing, Kandiyohi, Blue Earth, Dakota. Seen in 29 additional counties statewide.

SPRAGUE'S PIPIT
Single bird observed on 6/25 at Felton Prairie in Clay Co. BM/CG.

Cedar Waxwing
Nested in *Kanabec* CM, Crow Wing, Aitkin, Anoka, Winona; probable breeding in Cass, Kandiyohi. Seen in 36 other counties throughout state.

Loggerhead Shrike
Probable nesting in Wilkin, Otter Tail, Hennepin, Scott, and Washington counties. Also observed in Clay, McLeod, and Dakota counties; a single bird was reported near Winton on 7/2 in **St. Louis** Co. SS.

European Starling
Fewer reports than usual. Nested in *Kanabec* CM, Winona; probable nesting in Kandiyohi, Anoka, Ramsey. Seen in 33 additional counties statewide.

Bell's Vireo
At least two males defending territories near Black Dog L. in Dakota Co. (6/3–7/2 PBu, mob.); a single bird observed on 6/4 in Scott Co. SK; a singing male seen on 6/26 at Weaver Dunes in Wabasha Co. DWi; one bird observed at Nelson Fen Wildlife Area in Olmsted Co. (6/6 to end of June, JB *et al.*).

Solitary Vireo
Seen in seven north central and northeastern counties; plus Roseau, Marshall.

Yellow-throated Vireo
Nested in *Winona* JPo; probable nesting in Cass. Seen in 24 additional counties as far northeast as Koochiching, Carlton; and as far west as a line through Kittson, Otter Tail, Brown.

Warbling Vireo
Fewest reports in over ten years. Nested in Crow Wing; probable breeding in Winona. Seen in 31 other counties statewide.

Philadelphia Vireo
Only reports from Lake, Cook.

Red-eyed Vireo
Nested in *Winona* JPo, Anoka, St. Louis; probable nesting in Becker, Cass, Crow Wing. Observed in 35 additional counties throughout state.

Blue-winged Warbler
Nested in Winona; seen in 11 additional counties as far north as Chisago and as far west as Brown.

Golden-winged Warbler
Probable nesting in Crow Wing; seen in 12 other counties within regular range, plus late migrant 6/1 Scott and early migrant 7/23 Winona.

Tennessee Warbler
Observed in Lake of the Woods, Koochiching, St. Louis, Lake, Cook, Cass, Becker. Late migrant 6/4 Scott; unusually early migrants **7/12–13** Hennepin SC, *fide* PBa; **7/17** Clay CF; **7/23** Rock ND; **7/24** Hennepin TT; **7/26** Winona CS.

Nashville Warbler
Seen in 14 northern counties as far west as Roseau, Becker, Otter Tail; plus Chisago, Washington. Late migrant 6/1 Scott; early migrant(?) 7/13 Hennepin.

Northern Parula
Observed in Lake of the Woods, Cass, Itasca, Aitkin, St. Louis, Lake, Cook; plus late migrant 6/4 Scott.

Yellow Warbler
Nested in six counties including *Douglas* SWa; probable nesting in four other counties. Seen in 33 additional counties statewide.

Chestnut-sided Warbler
Nested in Crow Wing, Aitkin; probable breeding in Cass, **Rice** (adult feeding fledged young on 6/25 in Cannon River Wilderness Park; TB, GB). Seen in 13 additional northern counties plus Isanti, Chisago, Anoka.

Magnolia Warbler
Observed in Roseau, Koochiching, Itasca, St. Louis, Lake, Cook.

Cape May Warbler
Seen in St. Louis, Lake, Cook, Aitkin.

Black-throated Blue Warbler
Reported in St. Louis, Lake, Cook.

Yellow-rumped Warbler
Nested in Clearwater. Observed in 13 other northern counties as far west as Roseau, Becker; plus late migrant 6/1 Scott.

Black-throated Green Warbler
Seen in 10 north central and northeastern counties, plus Becker.

Blackburnian Warbler
Seen in eight north central and northeastern counties, plus Roseau.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER
Only second summer record for the state (first was in 1987). Singing adult male discovered at Sibley S.P., Kandiyohi Co. in late May (DWi; ***The Loon*** 66:210–211) was seen by mob. into early July.

Pine Warbler
Most reports in 14+ years. Seen in 14 northern counties as far east as St. Louis and as far west as Roseau, Becker, Otter Tail; plus Chisago, Anoka, Washington.

Palm Warbler
Observed in Koochiching, St. Louis; plus early migrant(?) 7/23 Becker.

Bay-breasted Warbler
Only report from Lake.

Blackpoll Warbler
Early migrant **7/30** Lake DPV.

Cerulean Warbler
Most reports in 14+ years. Nested in *Winona* HVA; probable nesting in Nicollet. Also observed in Anoka, Scott, Dakota, Rice, Goodhue, Brown; plus a pair possibly nesting at Sibley S.P. in **Kandiyohi** Co. RF *et al.*, two singing males on 6/26 in **Otter Tail** Co. SDM, and a mid-summer sighting on 6/25 in **Rock** Co. ND (***The Loon*** 66:154).

Black-and-white Warbler
Probable nesting in Lake. Seen in 14 northern counties as far west as Roseau, Becker, Otter Tail; plus Chisago, Anoka. Of interest was the single male observed throughout the period at Murphy-Hanrahan Park in Scott Co. BF, and the pair seen on 6/11 at Seven Mile Creek County Park in Nicollet Co. BF.

American Redstart
Fewest reports since 1983. Nested in Crow Wing, Anoka, Winona counties; probable nesting in Becker, Cass, Cook, Kandiyohi, Nicollet. Seen in 22 additional counties in all regions except southwest.

Prothonotary Warbler
Many reports; over twice the number of last year. Nested in Hennepin, Nicollet, Winona; probable nesting in Ramsey, Washington. Also seen in Chisago, Dakota, Goodhue, Wabasha, Brown.

Ovenbird
Nested in *Winona* HVA, probable nesting in Cass; seen in 30 other counties in all regions except southwest (but only Otter Tail in west central).

Northern Waterthrush
Reported in Roseau, Lake of the Woods, St. Louis, Cook, Cass, Aitkin; plus a singing bird on 6/16–17 in Morrison Co.(***The Loon*** 66:118) and the usual report from the Cedar Creek Area in Anoka Co.

Louisiana Waterthrush
Nested in Winona; also observed in Wabasha, Washington.

Kentucky Warbler
Confirmed **nesting** at Seven Mile Creek County Park in Nicollet Co. BF (***The Loon*** 66:115–117); this represents the first positive nesting record for the state.

Connecticut Warbler
Observed in Roseau, Koochiching, St. Louis, Lake, Hubbard, Itasca, Aitkin; plus late migrant(?) 6/9 Morrison.

Mourning Warbler
Nested in Aitkin, probable nesting in Cass; seen in 12 additional northern counties plus Anoka. Several birds observed throughout period in Murphy-Hanrahan Park (where it likely nests) in Scott and Dakota Co. BF; plus late migrant 6/5 Brown.

Common Yellowthroat
Fewest reports since 1983. Nested in *Winona* JPo; probable nesting in Cass, Crow Wing, Cook, Kandiyohi, Brown.

Seen in 38 additional counties statewide.

Hooded Warbler
At least three birds on territory within Murphy-Hanrahan Park in both Scott and Dakota Co. mob.; probable nesting in Scott BF. Also reported on 6/10 at Nerstrand Big Woods in Rice Co. *fide* PBa.

Wilson's Warbler
Midsummer observations in Cook, Lake; also seen in St. Louis (no date).

Canada Warbler
Seen in Beltrami, St. Louis, Lake, Cook, Aitkin, Pine.

Summer Tanager
First summer report since 1983! One immature discovered on 6/25 at Blue Mounds S.P. in Rock Co. *fide* PBa.

Scarlet Tanager
Nested in *Winona* JPo; probable nesting in Cass, Crow Wing, Kandiyohi. Seen in 29 additional counties in all regions except southwest.

Northern Cardinal
Nested in *Anoka* WL, Ramsey, Washington, Winona; probable nesting in Becker, Otter Tail, Kanabec, Nicollet, Brown. Seen in 14 other southern counties plus Morrison, St. Louis.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Nested in *Crow Wing* JS/MN, *Nicollet* WM, Anoka, Winona; probable breeding in Cass, Kanabec, Kandiyohi, Dakota. Observed in 34 additional counties statewide.

Blue Grosbeak
Reported from traditional range of Pipestone, Murray, Rock, Nobles.

Indigo Bunting
Nested in *Rock* DBM, *Winona* JPo; probable nesting in Red Lake, Cass, Crow Wing, Anoka, Brown. Seen in 38 additional counties statewide.

Dickcissel
Nested in *Winona* JPo; observed in 27 other southern counties plus Grant, Crow Wing, Otter Tail, Clay, Marshall.

Rufous-sided Towhee
Nested in *Scott* SK; seen in 12 other east central, southeast and south central counties plus Sherburne, Crow Wing, Becker, Beltrami, Marshall.

Chipping Sparrow
Nested in six counties including *Red Lake* SKS, *Douglas* SWa; probable nesting in Cass, Kandiyohi, Ramsey. Observed in 41 additional counties statewide.

Clay-colored Sparrow
Probable breeding in Cass, Crow Wing, Winona; seen in 27 additional counties as far south as Lyon, Brown, Olmsted.

Field Sparrow
Nested in Winona; probable nesting in Anoka, Brown. Observed in 18 other southern counties plus Otter Tail.

Vesper Sparrow
Nested in *Grant* SWa, *Wabasha* HVA, *Winona* JPo, Anoka; probable nesting in Pennington. Seen in 34 additional counties in all regions (but only St. Louis in northeast).

Lark Sparrow
Nested in *Otter Tail* SDM, Anoka; probable nesting in Becker, Goodhue. Also reported in Clay, Sherburne, Chisago, Washington, Dakota, Houston.

Lark Bunting
Three observations, all away from usual range: one male on 6/1 at Camp Ripley in Morrison Co. SM (***The Loon*** 66:118), a male photographed on 6/2 near Springsteel Island in Roseau Co. PS/SB, and a single bird on 6/24 near Duluth in St. Louis Co. *fide* KE.

Savannah Sparrow
Fewest reports since 1985. Nested in Wi-

Lark Bunting, 2 June 1994, Springsteel Island, Roseau County. Photo by Peder Svingen.

nona; seen in 36 additional counties statewide.

Grasshopper Sparrow
Very few reports (half the number of counties reported in 1989). Probable nesting in Sherburne, Winona. Seen in 11 additional southern counties plus Otter Tail, Clay, Pennington, Marshall, Aitkin; also 6/9 St. Louis (near Aurora) AE.

Le Conte's Sparrow
Nested in Marshall. Also observed in Roseau, Pennington, Clay, Wilkin, Otter Tail, Lake of the Woods, Koochiching, St. Louis, Aitkin; plus late migrant(?) 6/8 Lac Qui Parle RJ.

Sharp-tailed Sparrow
Only reports from Roseau, Aitkin.

Song Sparrow
Fewest reports since 1985. Nested in *Becker* RHu, *Douglas* SWa, Aitkin, Anoka, Winona; probable nesting in Cass, Crow Wing, Kanabec. Seen in 42 additional counties statewide.

Lincoln's Sparrow
Reported in Roseau, Lake of the Woods, Koochiching, St. Louis, Lake, Cook.

Swamp Sparrow
Fewest reports in ten+ years. Nested in *Winona* JPo, probable nesting in Crow Wing; seen in 27 other counties statewide.

White-throated Sparrow
Nested in Koochiching; probable nesting in Becker. Seen in 11 additional north central and northeast counties plus Roseau, Polk, Clay, Otter Tail. At least two birds heard singing from mid to late June in **Winona** JPo.

Dark-eyed Junco
Reported from Roseau, Clearwater, Koochiching, St. Louis, Lake.

Chestnut-collared Longspur
Only report: probable nesting along longspur road in Felton Prairie area, Clay Co. CM.

Bobolink
Fewest reports in over ten years. Nested in *Winona* JPo, probable nesting in Kanabec; seen in 35 other counties statewide.

Red-winged Blackbird
Many fewer reports than the previous ten-year average. Nested in *Kanabec* CM, Crow Wing, Mille Lacs, and Winona counties; probable nesting in Cass, St. Louis, Kandiyohi, Ramsey, and Nicollet counties. Seen in 40 additional counties statewide.

Eastern Meadowlark
Probable nesting in Kanabec, Wabasha, Winona; seen in 19 other counties as far east as a line through Beltrami, Otter Tail, Kandiyohi, Mower.

Western Meadowlark
Fewest reports since 1983. Observed in 36 counties in all regions, including St. Louis in northeast.

Yellow-headed Blackbird
Very few reports; less than half the num-

ber of counties recorded in 1989. Nested in Ramsey; seen in 26 other counties in all regions, including St. Louis in northeast.

Rusty Blackbird
Only report from Cook.

Brewer's Blackbird
Observed in 23 counties in all regions except south central and southeast.

Common Grackle
Fewest reports since 1985. Nested in *Otter Tail* CM, Winona; probable nesting in Kandiyohi, Anoka, Dakota, Olmsted. Seen in 38 additional counties statewide.

Brown-headed Cowbird
Fewest reports in more than ten years. Breeding confirmed in *Douglas* SWa, Crow Wing, Ramsey, Winona; probable breeding in Anoka, Brown, Nicollet. Observed in 30 other counties statewide. Parasitized species included Eastern Phoebe, Red-eyed Vireo, Yellow Warbler, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Chipping Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, and Northern Oriole.

Orchard Oriole
Nested in *Wilkin* SDM, *Washington* (***The Loon*** 66:155); probable nesting in Dakota. Seen in 14 additional southern counties plus Grant, Douglas, Otter Tail, Clay, Roseau.

Northern Oriole
Fewest reports in over ten years. Nested in five counties, probable nesting in eight; observed in 30 other counties statewide.

Pine Grosbeak
First summer record since 1971. Seen on **7/3** (this is the first July record at Red Lake WMA (three birds at one location, two at another) in Lake of the Woods Co. SKS *et al* (***The Loon*** 67:65).

Purple Finch
Nested in Becker; probable nesting in Cass, Crow Wing, Kanabec. Seen in eight additional north central and northeastern counties plus Pennington, Todd, Pine, Washington, Olmsted.

House Finch
Nested in *Kanabec* CM, Aitkin, and Winona; probable nesting in six other counties. Observed in 29 other counties statewide.

Red Crossbill
Only reports from Hubbard, St. Louis.

White-winged Crossbill
Observed in Koochiching, St. Louis, Cook.

Common Redpoll
First summer record for the state; late migrant at feeder until **6/8** in Otter Tail Co. SDM.

Pine Siskin
Probable nesting in Becker. Seen in 12 additional northern counties plus Anoka, Hennepin, Ramsey, Dakota; also 7/5 Brown.

American Goldfinch
Fewest reports since 1984. Nested in *Anoka* WL, Brown, Winona; probable nesting in Cass, Crow Wing, Kandiyohi. Observed in 44 other counties statewide.

Evening Grosbeak
Seen in ten north central and northeastern counties, plus Becker. Early fall migration observed along north shore of L. Superior in late July.

House Sparrow
Fewest reports in more than ten years. Nested in six counties including *Crow Wing* JS/MN, *Fillmore* HVA; probable nesting in Kandiyohi, Dakota, and Olmsted. Seen in 27 additional counties statewide.

117 W. Anoka St., Duluth, MN 55803

Contributors to the Season

PBa	Parker Backstrom
GB	Gene Bauer
TEB	Tom & Elizabeth Bell
BB	Betsy Beneke
JB/TS	Janet Boe/Thom Soule
TB	Tom Boevers
AB	Al Bolduc
DB	Don Bolduc
JB	Jerry Bonkoski
RB	Richard Brasket
PBu	Paul Budde
SC	Steve Carlson
TDv	Tim Davis
TDw	Tim Dawson
ND	Nelvina DeKam
ED	Ed Duerksen
KE	Kim Eckert
FE	Fred Eckhardt
ME/SK	Molly Evans/Sarah Kohlbry
AE	Audrey Evers
BF	Bruce Fall
TF	Tim Fenske
LF	Lawrence Filter
HJF	Herbert & Jeanette Fisher
EMF	Eugene & Marilynn Ford
CF	Cole Foster
RF	Randy Frederickson
RG	Ray Glassel
MH	Mike Hendrickson
AH/AV	Anthony Hertzel/Ann Vogel
HVA	Hiawatha Valley Audubon
NH	Nestor Hiemenz
KMH	Ken & Molly Hoffman
RHo	Robert Holtz
JH	James Howitz
RHu	Ron Huffman
CJ	Coralie Jacobson
RJ	Robert Janssen
DJe	Douglas Jenness
DJo	Douglas Johnson
OJ	Oscar Johnson
JJ	Jeanie Joppru
BK	Byron Kinkade
RRK	Ron & Rose Kneeskern
SK	Scott Krych
HK	Henry Kyllingstad
ML	Mark Leoschke
FL	Fred Lesher
BL	Bill Litkey
WL	William Longley
OSL	Orvis & Sandy Lunke
WM	William Marengo
GM	Grace Marquardt
DBM	Dennis & Barbara Martin
GM/JB	Gretchen Mehmel/Jeff Birchem
CM	Craig Menze
SM	Samuel Merrill
SDM	Steve & Diane Millard
MM	Martha Minchak
BM/CG	Bonnie Mulligan/Charlie Greenman
DN	David Neitzel
WN	Warren Nelson
RO	Robert O'Connor
CO	Connie Osbeck
JPa	Johanna Pals
JPo	Jennifer Pospichal
LR	Linda Rude
OR	Orwin Rustad
JSc	John Schladweiler
SS	Steven Schon
CS	Carol Schumacher
JS/MN	Jean Segerstrom/Mark Newstrom
DS	Drew Smith
JSp	Jack Sprenger
MS	Matt Sprenger
SKS	Shelley & Keith Steva
FKS	Forest & Kirsten Strnad
PS/SB	Peder Svingen/Sue Barton
RS	Richie Swanson
TT	Tom Tustison
DPV	Dan & Pam Versaw
SWa	Stuart Wagenius
DWa	Don Wanschura
SWe	Steve Weston
TW	Terry Wiens
DWi	Dennis Wiesenborn
JZ	Jim Zimmerman
DZ	Dave Zumeta
mob	many observers

Rice Lake National Wildlife Refuge Holds Record Concentration of Waterfowl

Christopher Lapp

During the period of 14 October through 23 October 1994, a record number of Ring-necked Ducks and Mallards was recorded at Rice Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Aitkin County. The refuge is an important fall staging area in the state, especially for Ring-necked Ducks. Fall numbers in the past have not approached the million-plus ducks that were estimated to be on Rice Lake during October 1994.

On Friday, 14 October, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) conservation officer/pilot Dick Stoltman and another conservation officer flew over the refuge and estimated over a million ducks on Rice Lake, approximately 60% Ring-necks and 40% Mallards. Their estimate was based on the size and density of the rafts of birds. I had previously conducted a count by airboat on 11 October and estimated about 85,000 ducks on Rice Lake. DNR waterfowl specialist Jeff Lawrence and pilot Stoltman flew an aerial survey on the refuge on 18 October and estimated 800,000 waterfowl on Rice Lake. I conducted a ground count by airboat on 20 October and estimated 400,000 ducks and geese. However, when concentrated waterfowl numbers exceed 100,000, they are very difficult to estimate accurately via ground surveys.

During the week of 23 October, waterfowl numbers on Rice Lake had declined to approximately 60,000 (airboat census). Counts for September through November 1994 were obtained from DNR aerial censuses of the refuge, as well as from ground counts reported to DNR by refuge staff. Waterfowl numbers are reported to the DNR Wetland Wildlife Group, who present them in a series of Fall Waterfowl Reports.

The 14–23 October, 1994, counts recorded the highest number of waterfowl ever on the refuge. These counts also represent the largest concentration of waterfowl ever reported in Minnesota (R.L. Jessen, pers. comm.). A comparison of peak waterfowl numbers recorded on the refuge during the fall migration over the past five years indicates an almost ten-fold increase in 1994 over previous years (Table 1).

Due to the large number of birds occurring on the refuge this year, the state modified their counting methods to provide a more accurate estimate. The 1994 DNR estimates were obtained by mapping the size (acreage) of the duck rafts on a refuge map, estimating distance between birds and projecting birds/acre and then estimating the proportion of each of the more abundant species in the rafts. In contrast, airboat counts and previous DNR counts at Rice Lake were obtained by summing block counts (100 + 1,000 + 5,000, etc.) of birds within each flock, and then estimating proportional species composition. Counts using the latter method tend to underestimate large concentrations of birds.

This was an unusual migration year and we can only speculate on what prompted the high concentration of waterfowl of Rice Lake. Weather conditions were mild for October, with temperatures and precipitation ranging from normal to above normal. Water levels were above normal north of the refuge, rainfall in June at Grand Rapids was the highest ever recorded; this resulted in poor habitat conditions on the traditional northern staging areas. The wild rice crop was poor in much of north-central and northeast Minnesota. High water in many of these areas discouraged germi-

Rice Lake NWR, Aitkin County, includes over 18,000 acres including Rice Lake, which is 4,5000 acres in size. Photo by Dave Heffernan.

nation of wild rice plants and made what rice there was unavailable to many dabblers. Lawrence noted that Ring-necked Duck and Mallard numbers in 1994 were lower than normal on traditional resting and feeding areas like Drumbeater and Bowstring Lakes in Cass County. Ducks stopping at these areas found little wild rice and may have quickly moved to Rice Lake National Wildlife Refuge, the next migrational staging area to the south.

Table 1.

Year	Peak Pop.	Week/Month
1994	1,002,440	2nd/Oct.
1993	74,600	3rd/Oct.
1992	99,050	2nd/Oct.
1991	101,800	2nd/Oct.
1990	95,730	3rd/Oct.
1989	106,300	3rd/Oct.

Rice Lake supports extensive wild rice beds and the production of wild rice is the primary objective of refuge water management planning and activities. Refuge water management efforts are directed toward maintaining stable to slowly rising water levels during the spring and summer, which provides optimum conditions for the production of wild rice. This is accomplished through the manipulation of water levels with water control structures on both the Rice Lake and Rice Rivers. During 1994, Rice Lake water levels remained close to objective levels throughout the summer and fall months, resulting in the production of a good rice crop. Rice density in sampled wild rice beds averaged 10 stems/square foot; we consider a density of 12 stems/square foot or greater a bumper crop. Good habitat conditions, coupled with the mild weather and poor habitat to the north, may have stimulated this unusual concentration of birds the second and third weeks of October.

The 1994 fall waterfowl migration at the refuge was spectacular. The extraordinary number of waterfowl utilizing Rice Lake National Wildlife further demonstrates the importance of staging areas, water management, and extensive wild rice beds to migrating waterfowl. **Rice Lake NWR, McGregor, MN 55760.**

BIRDING BY HINDSIGHT

A Further Look at... the Calendar

Kim R. Eckert

There are all kinds of bird identification problems. Some because the species and their field marks have long been and always will be hard to figure out. Others because the field guides include incomplete or inaccurate information on the birds in question. But some identification difficulties could be more easily resolved if birders made more use of one certain tool. No, not more expensive optics or a larger library of bird books — just a plain old calendar.

Every year there are reports of species that come in during April or March or even earlier that would be unusually early migrants. (Or, conversely, birds during October or November or later that would be unexpectedly late.) And every year it can safely be assumed that most of these involve misidentifications that might have been avoided if the observer had been aware of the date and that the species being reported then would be unlikely.

There is almost a pattern here. It always seems to be the same birds every year involved in these early spring (or late fall) identification difficulties:

• It is a mild day for late February, and you're in southeastern Minnesota, perhaps at Whitewater Wildlife Management Area, hoping for early migrants. A large raptor glides by with a striking under wing pattern: its pale gray flight feathers contrast with solid blackish under wing coverts. A **Turkey Vulture**? Perhaps, but a dark-morph **Rough-legged Hawk** or adult **Golden Eagle**, both of which have this same under wing pattern, would be more likely, since a vulture before the last half of March would be unusual. But you can see the upper surface of the tail and it lacks the Rough-legged Hawk's pattern of white base/black terminal band? It still might be a dark-morph Rough-legged, which has a more uniformly dark tail: it's only light-morph immatures and adult females that have that "textbook" black-and-white tail. And you say the head and bill appears too small for an eagle? Perhaps too small for a Bald Eagle, but a Golden Eagle's head and bill profile is noticeably smaller than a Bald Eagle's. This, in combination with the Golden's typically dihedral flight profile, give it a surprisingly Turkey Vulture-like aspect.

• Later the same day, a couple of other large raptors are seen. One is perched and its head is mostly white except for a distinct brown band through the eye; the other has distinct, almost round, black carpal or "wrist" patches on the under wings. Obviously a couple of **Ospreys**, right? If it were April, perhaps; in February, Bald Eagle and Rough-legged Hawk would perfectly fit these descriptions and be far

more likely. Sub-adult **Bald Eagles** often have mostly white heads with a dusky line on the side of the head through the eye and are thus easily mistaken for Ospreys. And light-morph **Rough-legged Hawks**, as well as Ospreys, have dark carpal marks; but note that this mark on a Rough-legged is rounder and more clearly delineated, since the dark area on an Osprey's under wing is larger and elongated, extending beyond the "wrist" along the edge of the wing coverts towards the body.

• Surely, there wouldn't still be other raptors presenting potential difficulties in late winter/early spring? Unfortunately, **Broad-winged Hawks** are frequently and erroneously reported in March, even though the species does not typically arrive until mid-April. A raptor with a broadly banded tail at this time of year is more likely an accipiter (e.g., a Cooper's Hawk) or a Red-shouldered Hawk. **Accipiters** frequently soar and fan their tails in the manner of a buteo: note, however, their tails appear longer than a buteo and have more visible bands (an adult Broad-winged typically shows only three bands, two black and one white). Also, field guide descriptions to the contrary, the dark and light tail bands on accipiters and adult Broad-wingeds are not of equal width: the dark bands on an accipiter are actually narrower than the pale bands, while the visible white band on the Broad-winged is narrower than the black bands. Similarly, the dark and light tail bands of **Red-shouldered Hawks** of all ages sometimes appear to be of equal width, like a Broad-winged is supposed to look, and unlike the field guides' portrayal of the white bands being narrower. Also note, like an accipiter, a soaring Red-shouldered shows more visible tail bands than an adult Broad-winged.

• It is April in western Minnesota and you've found a flooded field with some early migrant shorebirds, including a few dowitchers. If calling, the identification of these dowitchers would be straightforward. But they are silent, and the light is poor, so that it is hard to see if they have relatively bright upperparts and lightly marked underparts (which would indicate alternate-plumaged — i.e., breeding-plumaged — **Short-billed Dowitcher** of the subspecies *hendersoni*, the race which migrates through Minnesota) or darker upperparts and more heavily barred and spotted underparts (indicating **Long-billed Dowitcher**). So are they Short-billeds or Long-billeds? The shakiest course would be to assume they are Short-billeds, which are not normally present until May; the most prudent decision is to call them "dowitcher, sp.", of course, but they are most likely Long-billeds which arrive earlier in spring and depart the state later in fall. (Actually, the dowitcher problem is more prevalent in fall migration. Silent juveniles are separable by their tertial patterns, but basic-plumaged — i.e., winter-plumaged — dowitchers are not. Consider, then, the calendar: if July it's likely a Short-billed, if September or October assume it's a Long-billed, and in August you'd better hope it calls.)

• A small adult tern flies by you in mid-April, but the view is too brief and the light too poor to discern bill color or how frosty or dusky the flight feathers are. So, as the name suggests, you assume it to be a **Common Tern**, right? Wrong. The **Forster's Tern** is the earlier migrant, with Commons not to be expected until late April or early May. And, despite its name, Commons are not common even later in the year; unlike the more widespread Forster's, they are only routinely found during migration or summer on the few large lakes where they nest — e.g., Mille Lacs, Leech, Lake of the Woods and Superior. (By the way, in summer or fall don't rely on bill color or wing pattern to separate juvenile or basic-plumaged Commons and Forster's. Instead, whether the tern is resting or flying, look for a blackish bar on the "shoulders" or leading edge of the upper wing coverts: if present, it's a Common; if absent, it's a Forster's.)

• It's just after sunset in early April and you distinctly hear a nasal, rasping buzz: "peent!" It must be the first **Common Nighthawk** of the year, isn't it? Hardly. Not when you consider the first nighthawks don't usually arrive until late April, and that one isn't to be expected until mid-May in northern Minnesota. So what sounds like a nighthawk before then? **American Woodcocks** are back in March, and their "peenting" is similar enough to the nighthawk's call to cause confusion, although it is thinner and higher-pitched. And there is still another bird that sounds even more like a nighthawk: if you're near a lake or river, odds are that early spring buzz you hear is a male **Common Goldeneye**, a call many experienced birders are unaware of.

• You're studying this nondescript flycatcher and it is April. It lacks any trace of an eye ring and looks too large to be an Empidonax, but it has wing bars — therefore, doesn't it have to be an **Eastern Wood-Pewee**, even though that species isn't normally here until May? Not when you consider that it is entirely normal for an **Eastern Phoebe** of any age to show wing bars. The field guides inexplicably claim that only juvenile phoebes have wing bars, but many adults have them as well, and, while they may not be as bold as a wood-pewee's wing bars, they are quite noticeable and this frequently misleads observers into erroneously reporting wood-pewees in April.

• A wren in early April catches the corner of your eye before it vanishes (wren-like, of course) into heavy cover. Is it more likely a **Winter Wren** or a **House Wren**? The odds favor Winter Wren, since the first House Wrens don't normally arrive until the last half of April. But to be sure and if by chance you get another look at it, try to see the tail length (although the stubbier Winter Wren's tail may be hard to tell without comparison), the Winter's heavier under tail barring (careful: the House Wren is also barred here), and the Winter's paler and more contrasting supercilium (but also difficult to determine without comparison).

• Then just after that wren disappears a *Catharus* thrush pops into view. But only briefly, of course, and characteristically it lurks in the shade. You look for a rusty-colored tail but see none in the dim light. The face becomes visible and a buffy eye ring seems to be evident, similar to a **Swainson's Thrush**, but there is also a grayish tone on the face like a **Gray-cheeked Thrush**. And as it vanishes — wren-like, of course — you wonder why it isn't a **Veery**. So why am I virtually certain you've just seen a **Hermit Thrush**? The calendar: only the Hermit is normally present in Minnesota before late April. Note that the rusty tail on a Hermit Thrush is often not visible if in the shade (where thrushes always seem to be), and that Hermits typically have a buffy eye ring (like a Swainson's) or a grayish face (like a Gray-cheeked). Because of their subtle coloration, habitual shyness and fondness for shadowy cover, thrushes seem to get misidentified all the time. But if it is April, start with the premise that it's probably a Hermit and don't call it one of the others without careful study. (A *Catharus* postscript: be aware that Veeries have distinctly grayish cheeks, so before identifying a Gray-cheeked make sure you've taken Veery, generally a more common species, into consideration.)

• The issue of shrike identification is more of a problem in late fall and winter, when only **Northern Shrikes** are normally present, but when one is sometimes mistaken for a **Loggerhead Shrike**. The problem arises when a Northern is seen but its underparts barring is not, and an observer erroneously assumes it must be a Loggerhead — unaware that the barring is typically difficult to see. Birders also have difficulty when trying to see whether or not the mask extends over the shrike's bill, which is also hard to tell in most cases. Besides the calendar (in spring, don't expect a Loggerhead until late March, and in northeastern Minnesota you can ex-

pect to see Northerns lingering into April), pay attention to the Northern's longer, more strongly hooked bill (stubbier bill with a less obvious hook on Loggerhead), and the Northern's thinner and more fragmented mask (thicker and more solidly black on a Loggerhead).

• You have a good ear for bird songs, and one April day you hear some familiar monotonous phrases from an unseen bird. But after having listened to the **Red-eyed Vireo**'s ubiquitous song all last summer, you know that it has to be a vireo, right? Perhaps in May you'd be correct, but before then it is most likely a **Purple Finch** you're hearing. Even experienced listeners are unaware that one of the Purple Finches calls strongly resembles the phrases of a Red-eyed Vireo song. (Another postscript: in fall the Purple Finch has another whistling call that to my ear sounds identical to a Pine Grosbeak, and this undoubtedly has resulted in some erroneous Pine Grosbeak reports before that species normally arrives in late October.)

• A nice wave of warblers happens by you in early May, and among them in the tree tops you get a brief but distinct view of a bold white eye ring, gray head, greenish upperparts and bright yellow underparts. After all these years of searching, have you finally managed to turn up your lifer **Connecticut Warbler**, one of Minnesota's most highly sought specialties? Probably not, especially when you consider that Connecticuts don't arrive until mid- to late May, and that migrants skulk and walk through low cover rather than actively flit around like, well, a warbler (only singing male Connecticuts on breeding territory are found in the tree tops). Take another look at the throat and I'll bet it was yellow, not gray, and you actually had the far more common and more "warbler-like" **Nashville Warbler**.

• On the first of April a rusty-capped sparrow appears at your feeder. You can't quite see if it has a black breast spot, but you don't think so, so why not assume it's a **Chipping Sparrow**? April Fool, as the saying goes, and you're in the company of so many other birders who have mistaken an **American Tree Sparrow** for a Chipping during late fall, winter or early spring. While there are valid Chipping Sparrow records from November to March, they don't usually arrive much before the first of April, especially in northern Minnesota. And be aware that American Tree Sparrows often fluff up their breast feathers so that their breast spot is difficult to see, resulting in erroneous Chipping Sparrow reports.

• But, speaking of hindsight, what about that mixed flock of blackbirds you saw at Whitewater back in February when you were trying to figure out those raptors? Surely those nondescript ones with the pale eyes and moderately long tails were **Brewer's Blackbirds**, and those with the brownish heads had to be **Brown-headed Cowbirds**. Well, speaking of hindsight, think again. Unfortunately these two species, which generally don't arrive in the state before mid-March, are often incorrectly reported from December through February. The problem is that wintering **Common Grackles**, especially females and immatures, may appear shorter-tailed and duller-plumaged than males in spring, and they end up being mistaken for Brewer's Blackbirds. And **Rusty Blackbirds**, which are rare but regular most winters, are brownish then on much of their plumage, including their heads. This results then in incorrect reports of cowbirds, which (like Brewer's Blackbirds) are much less likely in winter than Rustys.

Now that it is April, take another look at the list of birds you've made note of during your birding rounds so far this spring. If it includes any of the species discussed above, and you have no doubts about what you saw, consider yourself fortunate: it either means we're enjoying an earlier than normal spring migration or that you've found something unusual. But if, after reading this,

you think you might have erred in your identification, don't despair — take comfort that you're not alone, that many others have made the same mistake before you. And at least now you'll be ready to take on these same identification challenges when the calendar says that October an November have rolled around. **8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.**

Veery, Gray-cheeked, and Swainson's Thrush: Minnesota Spring Migration Dates

Robert B. Janssen

For a number of years, I have been concerned about the early spring arrival dates being reported for Veery, Gray-cheeked, and Swainson's Thrushes in Minnesota. I compared spring arrival dates from Roberts' *Birds of Minnesota* (1932) with dates used in my book, *Minnesota Birds* (1987) for these species. Table 1 reveals the resulting information.

	Early South	Average	Early North	Average
VEERY				
Roberts	April 18	May 9	April 30	May 11
Janssen	April 12	(May 12)*	April 22	—
GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH				
Roberts	April 20	May 10	May 5	May 12
Janssen	April 9	(May 8)*	April 18	—
SWAINSON'S THRUSH				
Roberts	April 30	May 7	May 4	May 11
Janssen	April 4	(May 7)*	April 18	—

Table 1. A comparison of Roberts/Janssen Minnesota thrush spring migration dates.

*These three dates represent my own personal average spring arrival dates (based on 32 years for Veery 40 years for Gray-cheeked Thrush, and 45 years for Swainson's Thrush).

A quick glance at the above early south dates indicates a wide discrepancy between what I reported in my book and those dates reported by Roberts: 26 days for Swainson's Thrush, 11 days for Gray-cheeked Thrush, and only six days for Veery. Early north dates by comparison also indicate a wide discrepancy, especially in Gray-cheeked and Swainson's Thrushes.

I do not believe that the migration patterns of early arrival in spring for the Gray-cheeked and Swainson's thrush have changed that much over the past 50–100 years, as evidenced by my personal records of average arrival dates.

I believe that observers are mistaking

HERMIT THRUSH

	Early South	Average	Early North	Average
Roberts	March 17	April 8	March 23	April 15
Janssen	March 17	(April 13)*	March 23	—

*See text.

Table 2.

Hermit Thrushes for Gray-cheeked and Swainson's Thrushes, and Seasonal Report writers, including myself, are accepting these records which appear in my book.

A final comparison for Hermit Thrush also supports the previous comments (Table 2).

In summary, I would encourage Minnesota birders to use extreme care in identifying Gray-cheeked, Swainson's, and Hermit Thrushes and Veerys during the month of April, especially during the first three weeks of the month. **10521 S. Cedar Lake Rd., #212, Minnetonka, MN 55305.**

Proceedings of the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee

Kim R. Eckert, M.O.R.C. Secretary

There was a meeting of the Committee on 4 December 1994, at which votes were taken on a potential first state record of a possibly escaped individual and on two recirculated records with inconclusive first-round votes; both types of records require discussion and voting at a meeting rather than by mail.

- The identification of a Crested Caracara on 18 July 1994 in Helena Twp., Scott County (***The Loon*** 67:59–61) was voted on and unanimously found Acceptable. The possible origins of this bird were then discussed and it was found Acceptable by majority vote as an Accidental (o) species (i.e., the possibilities of captive vs. wild origin are about equal).
- A Sprague's Pipit on 18 May 1994 in Big Stone Co. was found Acceptable on a second-round vote ***The Loon*** 67:56–57).
- A Common Black-headed Gull on 31 July 1994 in Duluth, St. Louis County, was found Unacceptable on a second-round vote. The identification by an experienced observer of this adult blackish-hooded gull was based primarily on its being slightly smaller in size than some adjacent Ring-billed Gulls and its pale gray mantle, which was similar in color to the Ring-billeds. While it was agreed that the identification was probably correct, it was also felt that a second state record should have more complete documentation. Most importantly, the patterns of the upper and under-wing surfaces of this standing gull were

never observed, and additionally, the brownish color of the hood was not seen and the primary observer did not see a reddish bill.

The following records were voted on by mail July–December 1994 and found Acceptable:

- Clark's Grebe, 12 May 1994, Thielke Lake, Big Stone Co.
- Ruff, 11 May 1994, Freeland Twp., Lac Qui Parle Co.
- Clark's Grebe, 30 April 1994, Lake Traverse, Traverse Co. (***The Loon*** 66:154–155).
- Sprague's Pipit, 25 June 1994, Felton Prairie, Clay Co.
- Mississippi Kite, 6 August 1994, Roseau, Roseau Co.
- Clark's Grebe, 9-16 July 1994, Minnesota Lake Faribault Co. (***The Loon*** 66:208).
- Yellow-throated Warbler, 28 May-June 1994, Sibley State Park, Kandiyohi Co. (***The Loon*** 66:210–211).
- Common Black-headed Gull, 4–14 August 1994, Spirit L., Jackson Co. (***The Loon*** 67:54–55).
- Mississippi Kite, 16 September 1994, Coon Rapids, Anoka Co. (***The Loon*** 66:214–215).
- Pomarine Jaeger, 20 September 1994, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (***The Loon*** 66:209–210).
- White-winged Dove, 15 September 1994, Duluth, St. Louis Co. (***The Loon*** 66:213–214).
- Yellow-throated Warbler, 8 October 1994, Stillwater, Washington Co. (***The Loon*** 66:211).
- Lewis' Woodpecker, 31 May 1994, McKeowen Lake, Cass Co. (***The Loon*** 66:210).
- Laughing Gull, 19 October 1994, Oscar Twp., Otter Tail Co. (***The Loon*** 66:216).
- Pacific Loon, 29-30 October 1994, Two Harbors, Lake Co.
- Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 21 October 1994, near Rothsay W.M.A., Wilkin Co. (***The Loon*** 67:63).
- Pacific Loon, 8–12 November 1994, Duluth, St. Louis Co.
- Sage Thrasher, 23 October-November 1994, Richfield, Hennepin Co. (***The Loon*** 66:206).
- Black-throated Gray Warbler, 29 October 1994, Amador Twp., Chisago Co. (***The Loon*** 66:207).
- King Eider, 28–30 November 1994, Grand Marais, Cook Co. (***The Loon*** 67:62–63).
- White-eyed Vireo, 22 May 1994, near Granite Falls, Chippewa Co. (***The Loon*** 67:64).
- Great Black-backed Gull, 9 December 1994-8 January 1995, Duluth, St. Louis Co.
- Vermilion Flycatcher, 25–27 November 1994, near Willmar, Kandiyohi Co., (***The Loon*** 67:57–58).
- Iceland Gull, 9–26 December 1994, Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co.

The following records were voted on by mail July-December 1994 and found Unacceptable:

- Great Black-backed Gull, 26 March 1994, near Baudette, Lake of the Woods Co. Because the leg color of this dark-mantled adult gull was not noted and its overall size was not clearly described, the possibility of Lesser Black-backed Gull is not precluded. In addition, the observer apparently did not use optics and the description was apparently written from memory about four months after the observation.
- Sprague's Pipit, 16 August 1994, near Big Fork, Koochiching Co. The incomplete description does not include the bill shape or the overall plumage coloration, and there is no direct mention of white outer tail feathers. Among other things, therefore, the possibilities of Vesper Sparrow and juvenile Horned Lark are not precluded.
- Cinnamon Teal, 16 August 1994, International Falls, Koochiching Co. The description is of a male in full breeding plumage, something which would seem to be easily distinguished from any other species. However, the

majority were uneasy with this record since a male Cinnamon Teal should be in the middle of its nondescript eclipse phase in August, a plumage which is normally held from June until October.

- Pacific Loon, 15 October 1994, Lake Traverse, Traverse Co. The description of this reportedly alternate-plumaged loon only includes mention of a "tipped up" bill, "white flecking" in rows on the back, "striping" on the throat, and a "puffy" gray head. While it was agreed the identification may have been correct, it was felt that something as distinctive as a Pacific Loon in this plumage should be more clearly described, and that the description of the bill and back are more suggestive of a Red-throated Loon. **8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.**

Fall 1994 Census of Migrants at Lakewood Pumping Station

Kim R. Eckert

For the first time since 1990, there was a count in 1994 of fall migrants along the north shore of Lake Superior at the Lakewood Treatment Plant in Duluth, more commonly referred to as the Lakewood Pumping Station (hereafter, Lakewood). Although an annual fall census of migrant raptors has been taken at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve since 1951, it was not until 1983 that a systematic count of other migrants was taken in Duluth; these counts in 1983–1985 and 1987–1990 have been previously summarized in ***The Loon*** (62:99–105 and 63:60–61).

As indicated in these articles, the counts in 1983 and 1984 were taken at the Hawk Ridge main overlook, and the coverage began at dawn each day from mid-August until about 1 November. In 1985 and 1987 (there was no count in 1986), the count site was switched to Lakewood, and coverage again lasted from mid-August until about 1 November; however, the counting was not done on a daily basis, coverage did not begin until mid-morning since the primary purpose was to count raptors, and there was no time to keep track of non-raptors on busy hawk days. Then in 1988, 1989, and 1990 at Lakewood, the emphasis was on non-raptors, the count days again started at dawn, and were on a daily basis from 1 August to 31 October.

The Lakewood site is located on the elevated mound adjacent to the treatment plant building at the corner of Congdon Blvd. and Lakewood Rd., about two and a half miles northeast of the mouth of the Lester River, within 100 yards or so of the shoreline of Lake Superior (see map, ***The Loon*** 62:101). Because this site is elevated several feet and there are no trees to obstruct the counter's view, this has proven to be a favorable location for monitoring the fall migration. When southbound diurnal migrants in northeastern Minnesota (including the raptors counted at Hawk Ridge) come to the north shore of Lake Superior, they generally turn and head in a southwesterly direction down the shoreline, funneling past Lakewood and

through Duluth in considerable numbers in their effort to find their way around the lake. Because of the orientation of the north shore, favorable weather for migration occurs when there are west or northwest winds; colder temperatures, no precipitation, and a rising barometer also tend to be conducive to movement. Migration tends to be heavy on a day preceded by a period of unfavorable weather and little movement of migrants.

Because of a lack of both funding and counters from 1991 through 1993, no counts were taken at Lakewood in those years, but in 1994, some limited funding became available for every-other-day coverage from 21 August until 30 October. Scheduled counts on three dates were canceled because of rain, so there was coverage on 33 dates, totaling 65.5 hours. (In 1988, 1989, and 1990, counting at Lakewood occurred on 82, 88, and 83 days respectively, with coverage totaling between 151.25 and 179.5 hours.) Coverage again began at dawn last fall and was scheduled to last a minimum of two hours, since most migration usually takes place between dawn and mid-morning. There were five better-than-average dates, with coverage between 2.5 and 3.5 hours, but there were also five slow migration dates with only one hour of coverage.

Generally, throughout most of the two and a half month period of coverage, unfavorable weather for migration predominated, i.e. too many days with east or south winds, rain or fog, and relatively warm temperatures. Therefore, a disappointing total of 59,333 individual migrants was counted during the fall of 1994, which amounts to about 1,800 migrants per day, or 900 per hour. This compares to an average of about 229,500 migrants recorded during daily coverage at Lakewood in 1988–1990, for an average of about 2,700 migrants per day, or about 1,400 per hour during these three years. By extrapolation, if coverage in 1994 had been increased to be comparable with the greater number of days and hours of coverage in 1988–1990, and if the migration on the dates in 1994 with no coverage were comparable to the days with counts, a reasonable estimate would be that about 150,000 migrants would have been counted, far less than the previously mentioned average of nearly 230,000.

Of the 33 dates of coverage in 1994, there were only ten days with a northwest or west wind with no precipitation, weather which tends to be conducive to fall migration here. In all, there were only six dates with a total higher than the season's average of 1,800 migrants per day. The two best daily totals were the 6,311 migrants (including 4,060+ warblers and 1,283 Blue Jays) counted during three hours on 18 September and, most impressively, the count (or estimate?) of 26,352 during three and a half hours on 20 October. This latter total is the fourth highest one-day count ever at Lakewood, and it includes 19,740+ American Robins, 2,490+ blackbirds, and 2,310 unidentified birds of robin/blackbird size. (The highest one-day total at Lakewood was the nearly 96,000 migrants counted on 1 October 1988, which included about 62,700 robins and 29,300 warblers.)

The flight on 20 October was unexpectedly late, since in previous years there had never been a day later than 7 October with a total of 10,000+ migrants. But prior to the 20th, there had been several days with relatively warm temperatures, unfavorable winds generally from the south or east, and low overcast skies or precipitation. Accordingly, little migration had been taking place and, when the winds shifted to the northwest and the skies began clearing under high pressure on the 20th, there was a large "backlog" of migrants ready to move through Duluth. Note that the 26,000+ migrants counted on this single day was 44% of the season's total, and without this day's count, the season total would have been a mere 33,000 individuals counted over the other 32 dates, for an average of only about 1,030 migrants per day.

Because of this generally lackluster fall season, there were only a few other noteworthy highlights. An out-of-range Dickcissel, detected by its distinctive call note, flew by on 20 September. Migrating House Finches were noted on three dates; this recent arrival in the Duluth area had not previously been noted as an actual migrant. (Incidentally, migrant European Starlings were also noted on three dates.) And there was an unusually good movement of Red Crossbills in northeastern Minnesota during the fall, which was reflected at Lakewood — a total of 500 individuals was counted, with the first individual on 6 September, and a peak of 205 on 12 October.

Other daily species peaks of note not previously mentioned include: 1,120 Cedar Waxwings on 25 August; 124 Sharp-shinned Hawks on 6 September; 13 Bobolinks on 12 September; 388 American Goldfinches on 16 September; 554 American Crows on 26 October; and 167 Snow Buntings on 30 October. On the other hand, Common Nighthawks and Pine Siskins were especially conspicuous by their relative absence, with numbers much lower than usual.

The primary counters during 1994 were Laura Erickson and the author, and we wish to acknowledge the assistance provided by Karen Keenan, Beverly Raway, John Heid, Tim Dawson, and Jon Peacock on some of the busier days. Special thanks are also due to Ken and Adele Johnson, whose generous donation made this fall's census a possibility, and to Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve, which provided additional funding. **8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.**

BOOK REVIEWS

Birding World, "Europe's premier monthly magazine for keen bird-watchers," as it bills itself, is indeed keen. Similar in approach to the American Birding Association's magazine *Birding*, this digest-sized journal has much to interest a North American birder, even one in the middle of the continent.

The issue in front of me for this review is September 1994 (this is a monthly publication). Here is what one finds:

- Seasonal report for the British Isles. Format similar to what we find in the National Audubon Society's *Field Notes*. This report, however, is replete with excellent color photographs of birds covered. There are 22 photos in this 12-page report, for example.
- Birding highlights from Europe, Scandanavia, the Azores, Canary Islands, Morocco, and the Middle East.
- A very detailed account, with photos, of Europe's first juvenile Red-necked Stint. It is as complete a description of the bird as one could ask.
- A long article, again with excellent photos and drawings, discussing separation and identification of Bicknell's and

Gray-cheeked thrushes. These are North American birds now lumped as Gray-cheeks, being considered for a split. The birds are vagrants in Great Britain.

• There is a "quizbird" feature, a challenge, I am sure, for readers in Britain and Europe, and definitely something to help sharpen the skills of an American birder.

• This issue also carries stories about the Oriental Bird Club, and a Chestnut Bunting found in Shetland. Again, the photographs are very good. The quality of the color printing throughout the magazine is particularly high.

• There is a book review section, valuable to anyone with interest in books helpful to birding outside of the United States, including Canada.

• And there is a section called "Pigeonhole" which touches on a variety of subjects, including, in this issue, Costa Rican birding, and birding equipment.

• The advertising in the magazine also would be helpful to persons interested in world-wide birding. Ads for books, trips, and organizations dominate.

The magazine is available by mail. Subscription price in the U. S. is £38 (about $60). Subscription requests should be sent to Hazel Millington, Stonerunner, Coast Road, Cley next the Sea, Holt, Norfolk NR25 7RZ. **Jim Williams, 3326 Martha Lane, Minnetonka MN 55345.**

A GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF MEXICO AND NORTHERN CENTRAL AMERICA. Oxford University Press, 1995, 840 pp. Paper $39.95.

With another unguided trip to Mexico in a few days, I was delighted the Howell/Webb Mexican guide arrived in time for a field test! Indeed, this is a monumental book, not only because of it's size but also because it's thorough, beautiful and packed with new information about birds of Mexico.

The 71 plates are wonderful with colors that are true. Especially helpful are the hawks. Webb shows all similar hawks in flight together including immatures. The trogan illustrations, however, don't do justice to these stately creatures. Not included in the plates are shorebirds and most North American warblers.

The short text opposite the plates is helpful. Included in one line is the common name, scientific name, size in inches/centimeters and page numbers of the long text. The remaining description of the plates highlights the most important field marks in two-three lines. I did notice that the abbreviated descriptions of the birds in the plates was easier to follow than the longer accounts which do not start with the most obvious field marks. The longer descriptions italicize important field marks.

Species accounts include family accounts, ID points (often very detailed), voice, habitat and habits (especially liked and found helpful), similar species, and status and distribution. Making a species list for destination and habitat is easily done with this guide using the range maps and the status and distribution notes for each account. The range maps are VERY helpful for a country with such complex habitats and geographic variation. What an improvement over previous Mexican guides!

I tested a few species on range. I'd see the bird, say to myself this isn't on the list, check, and by golly, there it was to a T in the range and habitat. I studied Ferruginous Pygmy Owl and Colima (Least) Pygmy-Owl and found the species accounts rich with information. This book seems well researched. The text also has line drawings pleasing to the eye. This book is not titled a field guide. A birder would need a caddy to carry it! But it is rich. The only other guide I'll bring on my next Mexican trip will be my National Geographic for illustrations of shorebirds, warblers. This book will open a new world of Mexico to birders and will do for birding in Mexico what Styles/Skutch have done for Costa Rica.

Carol Schumacher 1411 Skyline Drive, Winona, MN 55987.

Cerulean Warbler Nest Observations, Winona County 1994

Carol Schumacher

Summer birding is a joy. Warm days, more daylight, and more time in the field all add up to a less hurried pace than the rush of May. In June, many birds frequently sing, so learning nuances of songs and calls is possible. And nesting activity is fascinating! While walking a path in a heavily wooded valley on 24 June, I stopped to identify an incessantly screaming bird. The bird, a recently fledged Warbling Vireo, attracted a number of other birds; male and female Yellow Warblers; male, female, and immature American Redstarts; and a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher all approached the tree, paused, stopped within a foot, and flew off. Forever in my mind, this Warbling Vireo will go down as the best "pisher" ever.

A male Cerulean Warbler also approached the Warbling Vireo and flew off; to my surprise, he returned to the tree within minutes, carrying food. He then flew off to a bur oak and seemed to disappear, but in 20 minutes, he returned with food again, and again vanished from view. A female and what appeared to be an immature male Cerulean Warbler did the same. Was there a nest near?

It was 11:15 A.M. I sat down on a rock next to the stream to be less conspicuous. While these Ceruleans continued to land in the same exact spot, it seemed that they were flying to a nest out of the area. The female arrived, snapped up a large red moth, held it for over a minute, and then disappeared. She repeated this three times; she foraged in view, held the insect, and softly sang with food in her bill, and then disappeared.

After a half-hour, I moved to a different rock, which was also in dense vegetation along the stream. The female Cerulean worked up a tree branch, paused, and flew in the opposite direction. The pause, which seemed to be purposeful, became obvious when she repeated the sequence; when she paused this time, I was able to see two tiny heads stretch toward the food she offered. An incredible moment for me to discover the elusive Cerulean Warbler nest!

This nest was very well camouflaged. It was about 20 feet up a large bur oak and out five feet on a ten-inch diameter branch overhanging the stream. The nest was on the north side of the branch, hidden from my southern observation spot by an outgrowth of eight to ten leaves, which acted like a screen or a fan concealing the nest from all sides but the north. This nest was in shade except for the earliest morning light.

The nest protruded from the branch and was not located in a tree crotch. Two one-inch diameter leafless branches located closer to the trunk and two leafless twigs further out on the long branch served as perches for the adults when approaching and leaving the nest.

The foraging was different for the male and female. When the Ceruleans were first observed, the male was seen two times for each time the female returned with food. The female foraged close to the nest, while the male flew out of sight for long periods and returned with large insects.

The female made consistently short-spaced chip notes, sometimes nearly continuously, as she searched for nearly "invisible" insects. She did not again

venture more than ten feet from the tree and always dropped and foraged below the nest, never above it. She approached from the north and east, and once took a circuitous route to the nest. At one feeding, she arrived and fed the birds, the male then arrived, she left and returned before he had finished feeding the young. She perched on one of the adjacent leafless branches waiting for his departure before she flew to the nest.

From the side, the nest looked like a knot or scar on the tree. The only clue there was a nest were the two orange bills attached to two fuzzy heads that reached toward the food the adult held. The entire head or body of chicks was never seen. Their throats were white and there was some dark gray/blue on the crowns. Both heads and throats were downy. The heads seemed smaller than a dime.

From 12:35 to 1:05 P.M., a detailed sequence of feeding behavior was recorded. As coincidence would have it, the pace of the feeding slowed dramatically about the time I set the stop watch.

12:35	Male left
12:40:30	Female fed young
12:43:10	Female fed young
12:45:59	Female fed young
12:51:25	Heard soft song by adult male; he fed young
12:53:11	Male returned with food
12:53:40	Male fed young
12:54:50	Two songs sung in one and a-half minutes
12:57:07	Male chip, song, flew off
1:02:25	Female fed young
1:04:29	Female fed young

Once, a second male approached the nest tree and was chased off by the foraging male. An immature Northern Oriole approached the nest two times, and each time one of the Ceruleans returned to the nest without food and foraged again only after the oriole left the immediate area.

Also noted during the timed interval was that the male flew out of sight more times than not. During observations made before this timed segment, however, the male seemed to stay closer to the nest and returned at much shorter intervals.

On 26 June, the sky was cloudy when I began observation no. 2 of the nest at 12:08 P.M. At 12:17 P.M., the female Cerulean Warbler arrived at the nest with food and fed the young, who were out of sight. She then dropped into the underbrush, foraging and making delicate chip notes. The male arrived and fed the young at 12:18, 12:18:50, and 12:19. At 12:19:45 and at 12:20, the female returned with food. At that last feeding, I could see two light gray downy heads stretching toward the insect she held. The sun also made an appearance, improving the lighting conditions. At 12:20:15, the female returned, making a soft chipping sound. Foraging was frantic activity with very short intervals away from the nest. At 12:22:20, the female returned to the nest. At 12:23, she revisited the nest, again chipping very softly. A movement at the nest was observed, which could have been a juvenile flexing a wing. The female then foraged further from the nest.

At 12:30, I moved 20 feet away from the nest tree, hoping for a better look. With binoculars, I could see a tiny head leaning over the rim. At 12:33, the female chipped nearby. The nest was attached to the opposite side of the branch and this was the best look I had had yet. No male was seen or heard.

On 27 June at 9:37 A.M., I set my watch for observation no. 3 of the Cerulean nest. An adult fed twice in two minutes. No singing occurred, but a soft chip was heard once when an adult was at the nest. Feeding, however, was not happening at the brisk clip of yesterday. At 9:52, an adult male American Redstart approached within six inches of the nest. He was chased off by the female Cerulean, who appeared out of no-

where.

I was at a loss to understand why the very dramatic change from yesterday, when nine feedings occurred in six minutes, and all within ten minutes of my arrival. At 10:02 A.M., the female arrived at the nest with an insect. She disappeared for a second or two; she then reappeared farther out on the main branch, a few inches to the right of the nest, still holding the food. A virtually tail-less young came from the nest edge and inched toward the female. The fledgling was eventually seen as far as three inches from the nest.

At 12:27 P.M., there was so much moisture in the air that the fog became too dense for me to see the nest. The fledgling was last seen making a tentative hop up the branch before it disappeared, following the adult upward. Two minutes later, a Cerulean Warbler sang about 50 feet away. The adults' long absences could be explained if they had coaxed the other young out of the nest before I had arrived. On average, Cerulean Warblers hatch a brood of four.

This brief one-half hour of observation certainly ranks up there in my top nest-finding experiences. My remark to Tex Hawkins a few years earlier that a Cerulean nest would be impossible to find floated through my mind. I sat on the rock for another ten minutes, savoring this experience, and then rushed off to work. This would be my last sighting of the species here until mid-August, although they were heard occasionally on several visits.

On 27 August, I heard a song that I thought could be a Black-throated Blue Warbler. On further investigation, it was relayed to me that one song of the Black-throated Blue is very similar to the Cerulean (Renner Anderson, pers. comm.). Given the location where the Cerulean nested, this singing bird could have been a Cerulean Warbler.

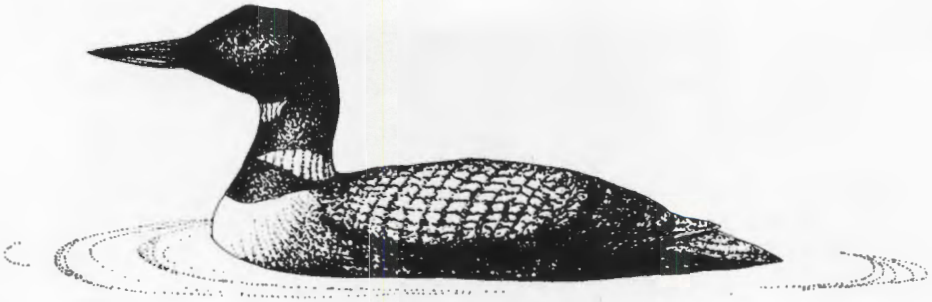
If you are searching for a Cerulean Warbler nest site, look in mature woodland with flowing water nearby. This species appears to nest in loose groups and also travels after fledging in small, loose groups. Its status in southeastern Minnesota counties along the Mississippi River is considered rare and local. Inland, nesting occurs in riparian habitat.

While doing research in Wisconsin in the summer of 1994, Dawn Hinebaugh found several nests in the bottomland hardwood forests in the Mississippi River valley in and around Winona. Cerulean Warblers are regularly seen in Beaver Creek Valley State Park in Houston County and several were seen in Forestville State Park along Forestville Creek on 13 May 1994. Nesting was suspected in each of these parks.

Several times during the feeding of the nestlings, I wondered if this might be a communal event. While there were no obvious individual markings on the adults to separate them, the rapidity of catching insects, returning to the nest, and flying off again was almost without pause. Later, loose flocks, including immatures and adults, were heard and seen, and this behavior before leaving the breeding ground is known. **1411 Skyline Drive, Winona, MN 55987.**

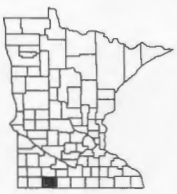
Correction

In the article on "A November Hummingbird in Red Wing" (***The Loon*** 66:213), I incorrectly identified the specimen as a female Ruby-throated Hummingbird. The specimen was correctly identified by John Klicka of the Bell Museum as a male Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

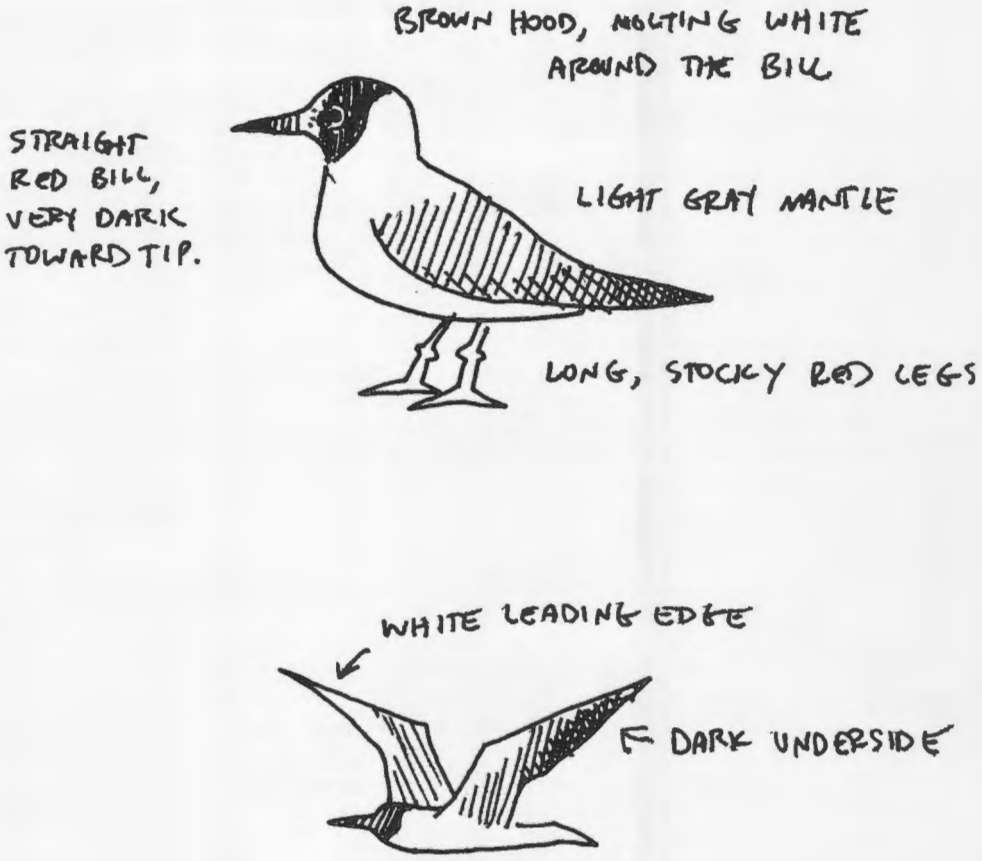


NOTES OF INTEREST

COMMON BLACK-HEADED GULL ALONG THE MINNESOTA-IOWA BORDER —



On Thursday, 4 August 1994, following a tip from birders in Iowa, I drove to southern Jackson County along the Minnesota-Iowa border to look for a Common Black-headed Gull that had been reported on Spirit Lake. After nearly four hours of searching this and nearby lakes, I eventually saw the bird standing on a jetty on the Iowa side of the border. It was in the company of several Franklin's Gulls and a single Ring-billed Gull. This bird was larger than the Franklin's Gulls, nearly the size of the Ring-billed Gull and seemed to have a longer, perhaps sleaker profile. It had a brown hood which could have been mistaken to be black had I not had direct comparison with the Franklin's Gulls. This hood began very high on the head. It was molting near the bill and was spotted with white in this region. The bill was straight and red, becoming very dark toward the tip. It had a broken white eye ring and the eye appeared black. The back and wings were the same light shade of gray, about that of the Ring-billed. The legs were bright red, long and stocky. This bird had the longest legs relative to size of any gull in the area. The neck, breast, belly and tail were white. Soon after spotting it, it took off and flew into Minnesota, passing overhead and in front of me. In flight it strongly resembled a Bonaparte's Gull with a leading edge of white in the outer wings. It differed from Bonaparte's in that the underside of the wing in the same area was very dark. It soon disappeared and I could not relocate it. I eliminated Franklin's Gull by direct comparison: mantle and saddle were much lighter, the bird was bigger, longer legged, had a brown hood and darker legs. Laughing Gull eliminated for similar reasons. Bonaparte's Gull is smaller still, and has a black bill. According to Iowa birders, there were three Common Black-headed Gulls in the area, two adults and one juvenile. The two Common Black-headed Gulls that I had not seen were frequenting a small pond about three miles across the Iowa border. I drove to this location and was able to see the juvenile bird and compare my notes and recollections of the bird I had just seen in Minnesota with this bird. While the coloration of the young bird was substantially different because of its age, the shape, size and profile were very much the same. Here too were many Franklin's Gulls and I had the opportunity to make the same size comparisons. Again, next to



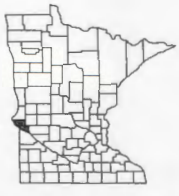
COMMON BLACK-HEADED GULL
AUGUST 4 1994
ANTHONY HERTZER

Editor's Note: This adult was seen by many other birders until mid-August at this same location, on both sides of the state line, representing only the second Minnesota record.

the Franklin's Gulls I noticed longer and stockier legs (though very pale), larger body and a longer profile. **Anthony Hertzel, 8461 Pleasant View Drive, Mounds View MN 55112.**

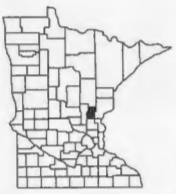
BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER IN WINONA COUNTY — On 12 September 1994, I went to Eyota to relocate the American Golden Plovers reported there earlier. After finding a few of them, I wandered gravel roads on my way back to Winona, alternately scanning alfalfa fields for more plovers and stopping at wooded areas for migrant warblers. At one of my stops, it was so humid that the top of the small valley had high fog, which meant hearing more birds than seeing. Walking a short distance from my vehicle, I heard and saw a Black-capped Chickadee flitting to a 15-foot, almost leafless elm about 10 feet away. A grayish/brown bird popped up from the dense ground cover. Immediately recognizing it as a female Black-throated Blue Warbler, I began focusing on features and ruling out other possibilities. The large warbler perched for a side view, showing the white square prominent on the folded wing, and it had no wing bars. The bird's eyeline was visible, but was not as thick as the eyeline on Northern or Louisiana waterthrushes. Overall, the bird was brown above and off-white below, with no streaking or other markings, and it had lighter, but not white, undertail coverts. The bird had no wing bars. This bird was too large for a Common Yellowthroat, which does not have a square wing patch. It lacked the prominent eye ring of the Connecticut Warbler. This was not a sub-adult male American Redstart, which can sport a yellow wing patch, but it is not as white or defined as this Black-throated Blue's. Female Cerulean Warblers can have a gray/green cast, but have two wing bars, which this bird did not. The bird dropped down and a junco-like chip was heard five times. There were no Dark-eyed Juncos in the area and the earliest record I have of them is 15 September. Thirty to 40 other warblers were moving through at the time, making quick touch-downs and then flying off. Standing still for another 10 minutes, I hoped that it would pop up again, but it didn't. I searched this area for an hour and a half, and was unable to relocate any warblers. "Little brown birds" are worth looking over! **Carol Schumacher, 1411 Skyline Drive, Winona, MN 55987.**

SPRAGUE'S PIPIT IN BIG STONE COUNTY — Wednesday, 18 May 1994, Tony Hertzel and I were driving a narrow gravel road laid north-south through the dry highlands of Big Stone County. A small brown-streaked bird took flight from the center of the road and settled into the field on the east, perhaps 75 feet from our car. Behind us the late afternoon sun provided ideal lighting, and the dirt and stubble of the field's surface was not coarse enough to obstruct our view, yet we had trouble relocating the bird. Its camouflage was so effective, it concealed any profile even though we had watched carefully, and were fairly certain of the bird's location. Eventually it began to walk, giving us an opportunity to study its behavior and plumage, at least intermittently as the bird continued to evaporate and reappear. The image through a window-mounted spotting scope at 20X was that of a small grassland bird with characteristic black and white tail. On this bird, the central tail feathers were completely dark, and the outer tail feathers appeared completely white, like a Horned Lark, or Vesper Sparrow, or maybe a Smith's Longspur. But unlike these species, the face was uninteresting, except that its uniformity caused the dark eyes to stand out significantly enough to generate several remarks from us at the time. It reminded me of Peterson's

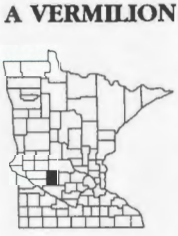


"shoebutton eye" description for the Upland Sandpiper. In contrast, the crown was heavily marked by streaks visually connected to its quilted back. The throat appeared white and the underparts were, in general, whitish, but streaks of brown invaded the breast and extended down the sides. The bird had two pale wingbars, and indistinctly colored legs. It walked as though in a haunted house, looking over its shoulder, afraid to disturb any spooks. Tony followed it maybe 100 yards into the field in an effort to obtain a photograph. Eventually the bird flew and we began to discuss the identification. We considered larks, longspurs, sparrows and pipits. The only species in this group that possesses the same combination of characteristics as our bird, and for which our bird conflicted with no characteristic, is Sprague's Pipit. The streaked crown's contrast to a very plain face was unlike any American Pipit I have ever seen, and the plumage lacked any richness. In addition, the bird did not bob or pump its tail. Its solitary, suspicious behavior was correct for Sprague's Pipit, and the location, Big Stone County, is very near the extreme southeastern edge of its usual summer range. **Paul Hertzel, Rt. 1, Box 118, Martin, TN 38237.**

MINNESOTA'S THIRD MAGNIFICENT HUMMINGBIRD — On 25 August 1994, I received a letter from Craig Prudhomme of the Audubon Center of the North Woods, Sandstone, Minnesota. The letter contained information and photos of an unusual hummingbird that had been seen on 16 June 1994 at the home of Annette Brage on Anne Lake near Ogilvie, Kanabec County. The bird visited a feeder for a few hours on the above date. After examining the photos as best I could (unfortunately, they are too small to reproduce), I felt the bird was either a Blue-throated or Magnificent Hummingbird. Not being sure which species it was, I sent the photos and information to Nancy Newfield of Metairie, Louisiana, a known expert on North American hummingbird identification. Her reply was, "I have no doubt that the bird in the photos is a female Magnificent Hummingbird." There are two previous records for the Magnificent Hummingbird in Minnesota, both in 1987, the first a female seen from mid-June to mid-July at Itasca State Park, Clearwater Co. (***The Loon*** 63:168–169). The second record was of a male on 3–5 July at Boyd, Lac Qui Parle Co. (***The Loon*** 145–146). **Robert B. Janssen, 10521 S. Cedar Lake Rd., #212, Minnetonka, MN 55305.**



A VERMILION FLYCATCHER IN KANDIYOHI COUNTY — On 25 November 1994, I was watching the feeder west of the family room. Shortly after sunrise, I saw a shadow of a bird go by. Not thinking much of it, I kept watching the Blue Jays and chickadees. A short time later, the shadow came by again, doing a quick turn. Still looking to the west, I was thinking that the bird's shadow flew like a flycatcher; since the fall weather had been so warm, maybe one was still around. Looking to the east on top of our clothesline pole, I saw a flycatcher. It sat for a moment, then flew to the south side of our house and picked off a fly that was sitting there getting sun. The bird returned to the post. I took my Bushnell 10X50 binoculars and looked it over. The first thing I noticed was the marking on the chest. I took my Peterson Eastern book and looked for the Least Flycatcher, thinking it was maybe a young. Looking down the same page, I saw the Vermilion. No map was present on the page, so I looked again at the bird to see if it had a colored belly. It did, but didn't match the color in the book. It had the color of the Say's Phoebe, but was smaller. Since Say's are not eastern species, there were no maps for them in the book, so I called some people to see if they had any ideas about identification. The first two calls found no one home. Finally, I got hold of



Vermilion Flycatcher, 25 November 1994, Kandiyohi County. Photo by Jeff Weitzel.

Ralph Seybert. I told him what I was looking at, that it was about the size of a Least, with the belly of a Say's, and marks on the chest like a Vermilion. He asked to come over and take a look. When he arrived, we saw the bird and checked a couple more books that he had brought. He said that if we were down in Arizona (where he has seen the bird before), he'd swear it was a Vermilion. We went through the books again, and the only one it looked like was the Vermilion. I then went into town and picked up my dad's 35mm Nikon camera with a 100–300 zoom. When I got home, the bird was still busily picking flies off the house. I took some pictures and hoped they would turn out. On Saturday morning, I looked for the bird again, but didn't see it. The wind had picked up and it was cooler than the day before. The remainder of the day, I was away from home. **Jeff Weitzel, Rural Route, Wilmar MN 56201.**

The scenario was all too familiar. A message on the answering machine saying give me a call, I think I saw a such-and-such ... yesterday. Always yesterday (sometimes last week), and no matter how much time I spend looking today, the feathered friend is always gone. So it went with the Western Tanager, the Whip-poor-will, the Great Gray Owl and the Snowy Owl, Northern Mockingbird, and Varied Thrush — all birds seen in Kandiyohi County this past year by reliable birders, but not by me. This message was two days old, but I regarded it with cautious optimism. Since the bird was last seen, we'd had strong south/southeast winds, not conducive to migration. What about this bird, a Vermilion Flycatcher? My cumulative knowledge of Vermilion Flycatchers goes something like — they're beautiful, I've never seen one, and they don't belong anywhere near here. The call came from Jeff Weitzel. Jeff is relatively new to birding, but has an eye for what matters. His identification is accurate, and he knows when to call for a second opinion. (Ralph Seybert, who has seen Vermilions, also saw the bird and agreed with the probable identification.)

Besides, Jeff is good luck; we were together when the first county Yellow-throated Warbler was found in May of 1993. On 25 November, Jeff said the flycatcher was seen all day feeding on lethargic flies that had accumulated on the southern exposure of his house in the unusual warmth. The bird had not been seen the following day, however. Light snow was already beginning to fall by early morning on Sunday, 27 November, and the prediction was four to eight inches by nightfall (we got 10), not exactly optimal birding weather, especially for flycatchers. But I thought we should have a look around anyway. I contacted Jean Chapin and we headed out to Jeff's. It was snowing hard now, several inches had accumulated in the past hour, and visibility was only a couple hundred feet. Winds were gusting over 30 mph, and I silently questioned my sanity as we drove the five miles to Jeff's, northeast of Willmar. No flycatcher would be out in weather like this. Pulling into the driveway, we could barely see the house just to our left. Jeff greeted us in the garage with unexpected news. "I just saw the bird about three minutes ago." It had suddenly shown up on the leeward side of his shed, stayed a moment, then disappeared again behind the shed. We watched the shed from inside the house, with great expectation. A call also had been made to Ron Erpelding; we watched for the bird while waiting for Ron. Finally, a call from Ron, "can't make it; road's too tough." We bundled up and headed out against the elements, hoping the bird might be in the open side of the shed or attached lean-to. We circled and found no bird. Nothing in the old Barn Swallow nests. Still nothing as we worked our way around to the next side. From within a rolled-up bundle of chicken-wire, Jean caught movement, then out popped our unfortunately little bird. It stayed in the open-sided shed, which was a little dark, but was much better viewing than the blizzard only a few feet away. An immature female Vermilion crouched in the corner about eight or nine feet away, so close that binocular observation wasn't necessary or possible. We felt both victorious and remorseful. This delicate little bird over a thousand miles from home was in quite a fix. Rather than taking additional pictures (Jeff had gotten some the first day) or risk spooking the bird into the elements, we collaborated on the significant features — the light streaks on the cream-colored belly, the two faint wingbars, the peach-colored wash near the rump, the partial eye ring, the short chubby appearance — and left. It was time to jump into my four-wheel-drive truck and go get Ron. We arrived with Ron about 40 minutes later. Everyone was still excited and relatively certain the bird wouldn't wander off in the storm. Once again, we were reminded of the difficulties/disappointments of birding. Despite thorough searching, our flycatcher could not be relocated, nor was it seen again, to our knowledge. So ends the third state record Vermilion Flycatcher, the latest by three weeks. (All have been October or November sightings.) But we will never forget our snowstorm Vermilion. **Randy Fredickson, 416 – 19th St. NW, Wilmar, MN 56201.**

CRESTED CARACARA IN SCOTT COUNTY — On 18 July 1994 at about 6:40 A.M., I

was driving south of Jordan on Minnesota Highway 21. About two and a half miles north of New Prague, I saw a large hawk approach from the west and land on a high line pole. I was going quite fast and all I saw were big white wing patches and a light head. Intrigued by the white wing patches, I did a U-turn and returned to the perched bird. Before I could stop or get my binoculars out, I could see with the naked eye the unmistakable marks of a Crested Caracara. I watched the bird for about a half-hour with 8x40 Trinovid binoculars from a distance of about 70 feet. The bird was very alert, looking around constantly. It had no bands on its legs and the plumage looked fresh, with wings and tail showing no wear. It was an adult bird. I am familiar with


Red
Yellow
Pattern
in
Flight
CRESTED CARACARA
seen 2.3 miles NORTH OF New PRAGUE
Scott Co MN by RAY GLASSEL
0640 TO 0710, 18 JULY 1994

this bird from Texas and Mexico. The body of the bird was about Red-tailed Hawk size, but the wings and tail were longer. The tail was white, with a dark terminal band. A large white patch was present on the outer wing and could be seen from both above and below when the bird was in flight. The rest of the wings and back were brownish-black. The head had a black cap with a few feathers forming a crest in back. It looked large-headed and long-necked for a raptor. The bill was large and grayish-colored. The face was red from the eye to the nostrils and cere. The sides of the head and neck were white down to the upper chest. The chest was barred, black barring on white. The legs were long for a hawk, yellow-colored and appeared bare about three quarters of their length. The belly was blackish and the under-tail coverts white. After I watched it for about 30 minutes, it took flight westward and was soon out of sight. The wingbeats were shallow and fast; it didn't soar or glide when it flew. I got a good look at the white wing patches and white tail with a black terminal band. I had excellent light, as the sun was at my back the whole time. **Raymond Glassel, 8219 Wentworth Ave. S., Bloomington, MN 55420.**

Editor's Note: At the Records Committee meeting of 4 December, the majority voted to accept this as an A_o record, i.e., the probabilities of captive vs. wild origin for this individual were judged to be about equal.

FEMALE BARROW'S GOLDENEYE IN RAMSEY COUNTY — I was standing on the Mississippi River dike at Hardman Avenue in South St. Paul at about 12:15 P.M. on 1 January 1995, scoping the river for the male Barrow's Goldeneye that had been seen in late afternoon the day before, when I spotted a female duck that I recognized as an adult female Barrow's Goldeneye. The bird was swimming directly across the river from the metal stairs leading up the dike from the railroad administration building, in a backwater area, with about 10–15 male and female Common Goldeneyes. The afternoon had turned sunny; it was about 10 degrees, and the morning wind had dropped off. The bird was in perfect light, and I watched it for about 20 minutes through my Spacemaster scope with a 25x eyepiece. The bird had the cresty-headed look of a Barrow's Goldeneye, with a steep forehead leading almost perpendicularly down to a stubby, almost triangular bill. The bill was entirely orange-yellow, with a black nail visible when the bird was facing directly at me. It did not have the "duck-like" pointy bill of the nearby Commons. The head color was dark brown. The body appeared uniform gray, with a clear trailing white wing patch preceded by a smaller patch. The bird did not dive, and moved in and out of small groups of the other Goldeneyes. I did not have a field guide with me. I was familiar with this bird from trips to Alaska and had studied both females in Yellowstone National Park in early November. I made sketches in the car before consulting any field guides. I told several other birders about the sighting during the day, but did not return to the spot, and do not know if any other birders saw the bird that day. On 2 January 1995, I returned to the dike to again attempt to spot the male Barrow's Goldeneye. I was standing with one other birder near the metal stairs, about 200 yards south of the site at which I had seen the bird. The weather was clear, with perfect western light, and about 15 degrees. At about 2:50 P.M., two birders from Rochester, who were scoping the river about 100 feet to the north, called that they had spotted a female Barrow's Goldeneye at the far side of the channel. I was not looking for the bird at the time, and hadn't told them that this was near the spot where I had seen the bird. It appeared to be the same bird, and we watched it swim with a mixed group of male and female Common Goldeneyes for about 15 minutes through my scope and their Kowas (15–

60x zoom lens). They said that they had seen female Barrow's Goldeneyes in Alaska, and identified the bird, as I had, mostly on head profile. I had to leave the site, and do not know if other birders were told of the sighting. At home, I reviewed the field guides and found that the bird matched the pictures of the "western" female winter-spring Barrow's Goldeneye. This plumage is well-depicted in *The National Geographic Society Field Guide* on page 86; in Madde and Burnes, *Waterfowl - An Identification Guide* (1988) on plate 139d; and in "Separation of Barrow's and Common Goldeneyes in All Plumages" by T. Tobish in Birding, Volume 18, page 19 (1986). **Warren D. Woessner, 34 W. Minnehaha Pkwy., Minneapolis, MN 55419.**

A FIRST SUMMER RECORD FOR TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE — About 9:00 A.M. on

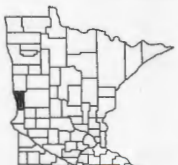
22 June 1994, along the Lima Mountain Road in Cook County, a bird was perched on a maple tree limb over the road. It was robin-sized, but slimmer. A prominent white-gray eye-ring was present, along with grayish upper-parts and pale wing patch. In flight, the wing patches were very obvious, with a rufous tinge. The bill was dark, straight, short, and rather thin. No vocalizations were heard. Under-parts were paler without streaking or spotting. In flight, white tail edges were plainly seen. The bird stayed perched as we got out of our car and observed it for a minute. It then flew rapidly away. We are familiar with this bird, having seen it regularly in Nevada and California for years. **William and Mary Rydell, 2900 Colton Rd., Pebble Beach, CA 93953.**

ANOTHER KING EIDER RECORD IN GRAND MARAIS — For the third time since

1988, there was a King Eider sighting in Grand Marais, Cook Co., when Maureen Briggs of Grand Marais found and identified two females on 28 November 1994 on Lake Superior just outside the east breakwater of the harbor. On the following day, she called me to report the presence of these individuals and said that Molly and Ken Hoffman had also seen the birds and had concurred in the identification. After news of the eiders was spread to other birders, Dave Cahlander, Mark Ohs, and I went to Grand Marais on 30 November and, with the help of the Hoffmans, who had returned for another look, we relocated the eiders at the same location. They were difficult to find and observe because of the high waves on the lake, but we were able to study them for about 15 minutes at a distance of 50–100 yards with a Kowa TSN–4 20–60x zoom spotting scope. Following is a description of the birds, based on field notes taken a half-hour after our observation. Overall, they were approximately the size of a Mallard (many of which were present in the harbor nearby), their plumage was rich brownish (not grayish brown), not as dark as female/immature scoters and not as solidly colored, with blackish flecking or barring throughout the plumage. There were also paler brown areas on their faces, chins, and upper necks, but these areas were not nearly as whitish or distinct as on scoters. Their overall plumages were nondescript and difficult to see because of the high waves; most of the observation time was spent examining their bills and head features in an effort to preclude the possibility of Common Eider. Their head shapes appeared high and smoothly rounded, with fairly steep foreheads sloping toward their bills. Their facial feathering was smoothly rounded at the base of the bills and did not appear to extend forward towards the nostrils as much as on a Common Eider. Their culmens were slightly concave and not as straight as on Common Eider, and their bills were gray in color. Also indicating these to be King Eiders rather than Commons was Mark Ochs' brief view

of the barring on the sides of one of the birds, which was shorter and chevron-shaped, unlike the longer, straighter barring on Common Eider. When diving, they spread their wings in the manner of a scoter or Oldsquaw. The eiders were also observed once in flight, and they had narrow, indistinct pale lines on both sides of the secondaries; i.e. there were slightly paler tips to the greater coverts and secondary feathers. These eiders probably came to Grand Marais as a result of a snowstorm and high winds which hit northeastern Minnesota on 27 November and, as far as I am aware, they were not seen again after the 30th. The two previous recent records of King Eider in Grand Marais were of lone females seen 30 October–2 November 1988 (***The Loon*** 61:38–39) and 20 October–late November 1990 (***The Loon*** 63:66–67). **Kim Eckert, 8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.**

A SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER NEAR ROTHSAY — On 21 October 1994, I



spotted a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher actively hawking for insects from a utility wire near a farmhouse along Wilkin County Road 26, four and a-half miles west of Rothsay. Audrey Evers, Mike Hendrickson, Sandy Mann, Cathy Nelson, and I were scouting the Rothsay Wildlife Management Area vicinity in preparation for a Minnesota Birding Weekend trip when the bird was first seen through a 40x Kowa TSN–4 spotting scope at a considerable distance of about 500 yards. Even at that range, its identity was obvious because of its long, deeply-forked tail, tinge of pale pink or beige on the flanks, and whitish appearance of the head, all of which were visible in the bright, late afternoon sunlight. The sky was clear, the time was about 4:30 P.M., and the sun was to the southwest with the bird to the southeast. After returning to our cars and driving over to the flycatcher's location, we could also see white outer edges to the mostly dark tail, the pinkish or beige flank coloration extending to the under-tail coverts, the grayish white breast, back, and head, and the darker gray wings. The length of the tail was relatively short — about the same as the length of the rest of the body from the bill to the tail base — probably indicating the bird was either an immature or an adult female. The possibility of Fork-tailed Flycatcher was eliminated by this individual's coloration on the flanks and under-tail coverts and its lack of black on the head. Unfortunately, our group could not relocate the bird the next day, as it probably moved south ahead of a strong cold front which arrived on the afternoon of 22 October. **Kim Eckert, 8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.**

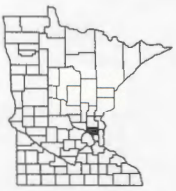
LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL IN HENNEPIN COUNTY — After sunset on the

evening of 16 November 1994, I saw what I was sure was an adult Lesser Black-backed Gull on Lake Calhoun in Minneapolis. On one of my last passes over the raft of hundreds of Herring and Ring-billed Gulls, with my scope at 20x, I spotted a gull with a blackish back many shades darker than that of any of the other gulls. The gull was slightly smaller than the surrounding Herrings, but considerably larger than the Ring-billeds. Its bill was pale, with some darkness near the tip. At about 5:10 P.M., I left the lake, hoping I'd have a chance to see the bird again in better light. On 18 November, what I assume to be the same bird was already on Lake Calhoun when I arrived at about 4:05 P.M. Its blackish back looked much darker than the other gulls', but lighter than its black primaries. Its bill was yellow, with a red spot near the gonys. While I was watching the gull through my scope, it lifted up and flew a short distance. Its legs were yellow. The bird remained in the Twin Cities area through the first part of December and was seen by many others. This is the third straight year that an adult Lesser

Black-backed Gull has been observed on the city lakes in the late fall or early winter (***The Loon*** 64:232, 65:125, 66:46–47). This year, as in the past two, the gull was not always easy to locate. Once again, it was seen not only at Lake Calhoun, but also at nearby Lake Harriet and at Black Dog Lake in Dakota County. **Steve Carlson, 3904 Xenwood Ave. S., St. Louis Park, MN 55416.**

WHITE-EYED VIREO IN CHIPPEWA COUNTY — On 22 May 1994, I observed a White-eyed Vireo two miles northwest of Granite Falls, Chippewa County. I saw, heard, tape-recorded and photographed the vireo-sized bird as it sang and poked about in the low brush. The song itself was distinctive, but I noted at close range the distinctive white eye and dark pupil. I also noted yellow spectacles. The dark bill was short and heavy. The head, nape, and back were a greenish-gray color. The throat and belly were whitish; the chest and flanks had a yellowish wash. The dark gray wings had two heavy yellowish wing-bars. The tail was also dark gray and squared. The legs were dark. **Al Bolduc, 4400 Oakland Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55409.**

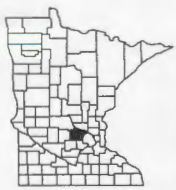
BIRDS OF LAMPREY PASS WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA, ANOKA COUNTY — The 175-acre study area and the 1,267-acre Lamprey Pass Wildlife Management Area are described in my report on the 1993 study in ***The Loon*** 66:34–37 (Spring 1994). About 1,027 acres of the WMA lie in Anoka County and 240 acres lie in Washington County. About 50% is water-covered. I selected an area of about 175 acres in Anoka County on which to map breeding bird territories. The spot-mapping method was used to determine the breeding population, as described in "Birds of the Boot Lake Scientific and Natural Area" (***The Loon*** 62:46–50). On 21 days from 14 March to 17 September 1994, I walked a total of 123 hours, usually eight to ten hours on each trip, during mid-April to mid-July, and usually beginning at first light. Location of each bird seen and/or heard was recorded, using a gridded map and a code for calling/singing male or female. Nest locations were plotted. I recorded 108 species on the 175-acre study area, compared to 104 in 1993. Probably 48 species nested on the area, compared to 42 in 1993. I recorded 33 local summer residents apparently not nesting on the area, compared to 35 in 1993. The number of transient/migrant species was 27 in both years. The total number of species recorded on or over the area for the two years combined was 126. Population density in 1994 based upon a minimum of 227 pairs, nesting/inferred nesting, and an area of 175 acres was 129.7 pairs/100 acres; 320.5 pairs/100 hectares; and 830.1 pairs/square mile. These figures indicate no change from the previous year, when breeding pairs numbered 228. Possibly the all-time record cold summer of 1993 and/or the severe weather of January 1994 were reflected by a decrease in the number of pairs of a few species of birds on the study area, comparing 1993 with 1994. Most notably, Northern Cardinal pairs fell from five to two; Rose-breasted Grosbeak pairs fell from eight to five; and Northern Orioles decreased from two pairs to just one observation of two males on one day. There was no real change in numbers of the three vireo species or the warblers. Song Sparrows decreased about 20%, while Red-winged Blackbirds nearly doubled. Flycatchers did not change or just slightly decreased. I was astounded by the number of small bird nests that became apparent on the study area after leaf-fall in 1993. Never have I noticed such a density, anywhere. I recorded a total of 40 nests, not including those found during the nesting season. The location of many of these nests confirmed previously suspected territories. Species and number of nests identi-



fied were as follows: Willow Flycatcher 2; Least Flycatcher 1; American Robin 7; Gray Catbird 5; Cedar Waxwing 2; Red-eyed Vireo 6; Yellow Warbler 8; American Goldfinch 6. In March, long before Howard and Mud Lakes were free of ice, the channel was open. Then thousands of winter-killed two- to three-inch yellow perch and schools of small live fish below the culvert attracted some birds, particularly crows and Ring-billed Gulls. Later, a few Great Blue Herons, a Great Egret or two, Common Mergansers, Common Goldeneyes, and Forster's and Black terns utilized the live fish. **William H. Longley, 532 W. Broadway, Forest Lake, MN 55025.**

SUMMER PINE GROSBEAK SEEN IN LAKE OF THE WOODS COUNTY — On 3 July 1994, I was helping Gretchen Mehmel do her Breeding Bird Survey along the Rapid River Trail in the south-central portion of Lake of the Woods County in the Beltrami Island State Forest. Beth Silverhus also accompanied us as we did the route. At stop #5, we heard a particular whistling call. Wondering what it was, we all looked around. Three birds landed on top of a black spruce. They stayed there for 30 seconds so we had ample time to examine them, and they turned out to be Pine Grosbeaks. There were two reddish males — red on the top of the heads and rump; the wings were dark. The female was grayer, with yellow-green on her head. We are all very familiar with Pine Grosbeaks, as they are a fairly common "winter finch." There was no need to consult any field guide; there was no problem deciding what we had seen. No other "winter finch" has a beak like a Pine Grosbeak. They somehow remind me of parrots — it must be because of that short beak. On stop #25 along the same route, we once again heard and saw Pine Grosbeaks. Our look was much briefer, for they stopped on top of the spruce for only a few seconds, but it was long enough to realize that the birds were Pine Grosbeaks once again. Both sightings were made in good light with binoculars. The habitat in these places was mixed tamarack and black spruce (#5) and solid black spruce (#25). None of us realized, however, just how rare Pine Grosbeaks are in the summer — one sighting in the summer in St. Louis County. Here we saw the birds not once, but twice! Were these mere vagrants or a possible sighting every summer in a rarely birded area? Only more time spent along the Rapid River Trail may in the future answer this question. **Shelley Steva, Route 4, Box 18, Thief River Falls, MN 56701.**

MINNESOTA'S FIRST DECEMBER YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER — On Saturday, 10 December 1994, Elizabeth Campbell reported to me in mid-morning that she had just received a call about a Yellow-throated Warbler. The bird was coming to the suet feeder of Robert Thornbeck, 5521 Meadow Lakes Trail, Rockford, in Wright County. I arrived at the Thornbecks' feeder about 12:30 P.M. and saw an adult male Yellow-throated Warbler almost immediately on the back side of a large suet feeder. Over the next 15 minutes, I watched the bird feed on the suet and along the base of the Thornbecks' home, where there was no snow. The bird flew around the house and disappeared to the west. It was about four and a-half inches in length, dark gray on the top of the head, lighter gray back and tail, and a prominent white stripe over the eye forming half an eye ring; a black ear patch appeared like a mask and extended down the neck with a white area between the patch and the nape; the throat was a brilliant lemon yellow, more restricted than in spring-plumaged birds I have seen. The lower breast, belly, and under-tail were white, and there were two white wing-bars and large gray-black spots on the sides and flanks. Mr. Thornbeck stated that the bird



first showed up at the feeder on 7 December and at that time, it fed voraciously, eating large chunks of suet. Ray Glassel saw the bird in the Thornbecks' yard about 4:00 P.M. on the 10th. The temperature dropped to -3 degrees by the morning of the 11th and Mr. Thornbeck found the warbler dead near the feeder at the base of his house. I retrieved the specimen and it is now part of the collection at the University of Minnesota. Prior to 1994, there were ten records for the Yellow-throated Warbler in Minnesota, nine occurring in April or May, and one in late September. In 1994, a singing male was seen at Sibley State Park, Kandiyohi County, in late May and early June (***The Loon*** 66:210–211). A fall record was of a male seen in early October 1994 in Washington County (***The Loon*** 66:211). The exceptional sighting in December represents the 13th record for the state and an extremely late occurrence for this species. **Robert B. Janssen, 10521 So. Cedar Lake Rd., #212, Minnetonka, MN 55305.**

AN UNUSUAL PLUMAGE IN SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS — Dilute plumage is an abnormal plumage in which dark brown colors are replaced by lighter brown, buffy or creamy colors (Clark, W.S. and Wheeler, B.K. 1987. *Peterson Field Guide To Hawks.* Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston. 198 pp). Several museum specimens of dilute plumage Sharp-shinned Hawks exist (Clark and Wheeler 1987). On 2 September 1991, while conducting a hawk migration count at Hawk Ridge in Duluth, Minnesota, I observed a juvenile female Sharp-shinned Hawk in dilute plumage. Its head, back, and upperwing coverts were uniformly light cream; the flight feathers (primaries and secondaries) were also cream colored, however, darker barring was noticeable. The vertical streaks on the chest, flanks and belly, typical of the immature plumage of this species, were visible but the streaks were a much lighter brown than then the typical red-brown streaks; the bird's tail showed the typical pattern of alternating equal width, bands, however, the typical light brown and dark brown bands were replaced by light cream and light brown bands. This bird was seen under excellent light conditions in the company of eight or ten normal plumage Sharp-shinned Hawks of both sexes. This somewhat scattered group of accipiters soared lazily overhead at a height of 50 meters, from 12:00 C.S.T. to 12:10 C.S.T. The observation was made using 10x50 Bushnell binoculars and a 20x Bushnell spotting scope. I would like to thank William S. Clark, Jeffery R. Dodge and David Evans for reviewing the original manuscript. **Frank J Nicoletti, Braddock Bay Raptor Research, 432 Manitou Beach Road, Hilton, New York 14468.**

BIRDS OF THE ST. CROIX SAVANNAH SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREA, WASHINGTON COUNTY — Results of the 1992 breeding bird census and a description of this Scientific Natural Area (SNA) were reported in ***The Loon*** 65:61–63. The spot-mapping method was used, as described in ***The Loon*** 62:46–50. On 13 days during the period 5 April–17 September 1993, starting near dawn, I traversed the area and recorded all birds by location on a gridded map. Information included sex of individuals; whether alone, in pairs or flocks; singing males; and activities that would indicate nesting. Trips averaged six and a-half hours on the area. I recorded 93 species of birds at the SNA in 1993, the same number as in the previous year. The total number for the two years is 109 species. Nesting and inferred nesting species numbered 29, one more than in 1992. Rufous-sided Towhee and Chipping Sparrow were added, while Ring-necked Pheasant was lost as a breeder. The total number of pairs represented was 73–75,

compared to 80–81 in 1992. Locally nesting species seen on or over the area, but not nesting on the area, numbered 38. Transient species (migrants) numbered 26, two more than in 1992. The two-year total is 31 species. Based upon a minimum of 73 pairs and an area of 85 acres, the population density was as follows: 85.9 pairs/100 acres (94 in 1992); 212.1 pairs per 100 hectares (232 in 1992); and 549.8 pairs per square mile (602 in 1992). Pairs of birds decreased by 8.6% in 1993 compared to 1992. The very cool, rainy weather appeared to have a depressing effect on songbirds. For instance, Field Sparrows and Song Sparrows sang much less and/or sang with less persistence, although there was only one less pair of each than in 1992. The cool weather also prevented maturation of seeds or fruits of several plant species. For instance, near the area, some European mountain ash trees dropped all of their berries prematurely. Vegetation management by SNA crews continued in 1993. Cutting of a half-acre of black locust trees on the south bluff top resulted in dense growth of five- to six-foot stump sprouts, which was practically impenetrable by late summer. Probably this dense cover will be burned in the near future. I believe the locusts were planted years ago for erosion control because sod grows well beneath them. Another erosion control practice in the last couple of years has been the installation of logs across deep ruts on the west slope caused by motorcycle hill climbing. The bikes have been virtually excluded by enforcement of the motor vehicle ban, but occasionally one sneaks in. Crews this year also pulled quite a few bushels of Spotted Knapweed, an undesirable interloper from Europe whose roots produce a cytotoxin which inhibits some competing plants. **William H. Longley, 532 W. Broadway, Forest Lake, MN 55025.**

A DECEMBER LARK SPARROW — I was surprised and interested when Forest Strnad, at the report session of the Faribault/Northfield Christmas Bird Count, told me that he had seen a Lark Sparrow. So a few minutes after 12:00 the next day, 18 December 1994, I just happened to be passing by the area with my wife and decided to stop for a minute and check it out. I parked at the entrance of a farm driveway off County Rd. 20 some six miles north of Faribault, Rice County. For five minutes, I looked west down a very sunny driveway, first spotting the Lark Sparrow at about 50 yards in a mixed flock of Dark-eyed Juncos and American Tree Sparrows. The flock was feeding on the ground and flitting from a small apple orchard south of the driveway to a nearby stand of small spruce on the north. What stood out at that distance was the Lark Sparrow's larger and bulkier size and much whiter breast and belly. In flight, it displayed a distinctive white-cornered tail. After observing it at this distance for ten minutes, the Lark Sparrow flew to the very top of a small spruce (about 12 feet high) some 15 yards from my car. Its throat, breast, and belly were an unstreaked white and it had a central breast spot which was slightly washed out. Although the markings on the head were quite distinctive, some facial features, like the moustache, also appeared somewhat faded or washed out. The crown was a dark rufous/chestnut divided by a white median stripe. A white eyebrow separated the crown from a very prominent, rufous/chestnut ear patch. At this close range, it displayed an eye-ring which was somewhat whiter than the white of the eyebrow. The legs were never in a good enough view to confirm their color. When it lifted off and flew directly away from me, the back and wings seemed uniformly dark. Because it was in view for about 15 minutes, I had time to use both 10x42 binoculars and a Kowa TSN-1 scope. I grew up with this bird nesting on my parents' ranch near the Missouri River in South Dakota. **Gene Bauer, 1232 E. Woodley, Northfield, MN 55057–2956.**

In This Issue

Purpose of the M.O.U.

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.

To carry out these aims, we: publish a magazine, ***The Loon***, and a newsletter, *Minnesota Birding;* conduct field trips; encourage and sponsor the preservation of natural areas; and hold seminars where research reports, unusual observations and conservation discussions are presented. We are supported by dues from members, affiliated clubs and special gifts. The M.O.U. wishes to point out that any or all phases of the M.O.U. program could be expanded significantly with gifts, memorials or bequests willed to the organization.

Suggestions to Authors

The editors of ***The Loon*** welcome submissions of articles, "Notes of Interest" and color or black & white photographs. Submissions should be typed, double-spaced and single-sided. Notes of Interest should be less than two pages. Photographs should be 5"x7". Whenever possible, please include a copy of your submission on any 3 ½ inch computer disk.

Club information and other announcements of general interest should be sent to the Newsletter editors. 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.

printed on recycled paper

The Loon

SUMMER 1995

VOLUME 67 – 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 Street S.E., University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455–0104; e-mail mou@biosci.cbs.umn.edu. Anyone interested may join. All members receive our two publications: ***The Loon*** and *Minnesota Birding.*

EDITOR OF *The Loon:* Robert B. Janssen, 10521 S. Cedar Lake Road, #212, Minnetonka, MN 55305 (612-546-4220). The Editor invites articles, short notes, and illustrations about Minnesota birds. See back cover for details.

MEMBERSHIPS: Yearly donations to join the M.O.U. are as follows: Regular $20, Youth (through age 17) $15; Family $30; Supporting $50; Life $400. Canadian and Foreign Subscriptions, $25. Also available are back issues of ***The Loon*** ($3.00 each ppd.) and M.O.U. checklists of Minnesota birds (minimum lots of 20 for $5.00 postage paid).

ASSOCIATE EDITORS OF *The Loon:* Kim Eckert, 8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804; Anthony Hertzel, 8461 Pleasant View Dr., Mounds View MN 55112; Peder Svingen, 2602 E. 4th St, Duluth, MN 55812; Dr. Harrison Tordoff, Bell Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455; Nancy Weber, 24420 – 224th Ave. SE, Maple Valley, WA 98038 **PHOTO EDITOR:** Warren Nelson, 603 2nd St. NW, Aitkin, MN 56431.

EDITORS OF *Minnesota Birding:* Jim and Jude Williams, 3326 Martha Lane, Minnetonka MN 55345. Published bi-monthly.

MINNESOTA BIRD REPORTS: Statewide 612-780-8890 Duluth 218-525-5952

ISSN 0024–645X

Minnesota's First State Record White Ibis

Howard Towle and Carol Schumacher

The White Ibis is a species which has been found far from its coastal home in southeastern United States and Central America. However, none has been known to wander into Minnesota long enough to be documented. This situation changed on Saturday, 13 May 1995, when Minnesota's first state record White Ibis spent a few hours in Winona County.

We were early in the process of conducting a Winona County Big Day and had arrived at Prairie Island at approximately 6:30 A.M. The morning weather was overcast with occasional light drizzle and moderately strong winds. While scanning the trees along the dike road for warblers, we noticed an odd-looking, large white bird flying from left to right across Hunters Lake. As the bird came in front of us and only about 100 yards out, we both exclaimed "ibis!" In flight, the bird appeared to be approximately one-third bill, one-third body and one-third legs. The body, neck and head were snowy white, while the tips of the white wings appeared to be black (the actual color being iridescent dark green). The long, decurved bill was evident even at this distance. The flight was somewhat erratic and labored, presumably due to the moderately strong winds, with rather rapid wing beats for a bird of this size.

The ibis flew over us and dropped out of sight on the other side of the road. We excitedly ran to the car and pulled ahead to find the bird standing on the edge of the swampy area there and only 25 feet from our vehicle. This area contains many bottomland hardwood trees which at this time of year are submerged at their base in water. The bird was standing on a fallen log and remained thus for about ten to 15 minutes, while we looked down on it from the elevated road bed. When perched, the bird's feathers showed completely white with no brown or gray streaking. The overall shape was typical of a heron with long legs and neck and a plump body. The length of the neck was similar to that of a Little Blue Heron or Snowy Egret. The outstanding feature was its long (approximately six to eight inches) and strongly decurved bill. The apparent length of the bill was accentuated by a featherless patch on the bird's face that was quite pink in color. The base of the bill was a lighter pink, and the outer third was a dark gray/black color. The very tip of the bill, however, had a small area of pink similar to the color of the proximal portion of the bill.

The legs were also light pink in color not unlike the color of the proximal bill in tone. As the bird was standing on a fallen log that protruded above the water by several inches, we were able to see the entire length of both legs and its feet. No bands were present on either leg.

The White Ibis made no sounds during the time of observation. While standing, it preened several times, revealing the dark tips of its wings. After standing on the log, it briefly foraged, once stabbing for some invisible prey, apparently unsuccessfully. By this time, several other birders including Carol Damberg and Eric Nelson, Biologists for the Upper Mississippi Fish and Wildlife, had arrived and began watching the ibis. Eric Nelson also noted the lack of bands on the legs. Over the next two hours, many birders from the Winona area viewed the ibis. Photographs were taken by Eric Nelson, Bill Drazkowski and Howard Munson (see cover). During this time, it actively foraged along the edge of the swampy area and on occasion flew up to perch about 15 to 25 feet above the water. The bird

flew off about 9:00 A.M. Several birders from the Twin Cities including Ray Glassel, Bob Janssen, Bill Litkey, Dick Rengstorf, and Tom Tustison arrived about 15 minutes after the bird had flown and were unable to find it despite extensive searching. Miles and miles of river shore, backwaters, islands, and sloughs that are impossible to search without a boat made this hunt difficult and the bird was not subsequently relocated.

As even second year birds retain some dusky brown streaking on the neck and head and mottled body feathering, Minnesota's first White Ibis was an adult. Sexes are similar in appearance (although the male is larger than the female). The darker pink color of its bare facial patch and dark coloring on the distal bill indicated a bird approaching the courtship period. White Ibises feed predominantly in marshes, ponds and swamps, and this area of Prairie Island presented a reasonable (for Minnesota) approximation of its typical haunts.

White Ibis breed along coastal areas of the United States from southeastern Virginia to Texas and further south through Mexico and Central America to South America. Recently, an increased number of spring sightings and interesting behavior in Arkansas suggest the breeding range may be expanding (Charles Mills, Arkansas Records Committee, personal communication). The White Ibis is a highly nomadic species within its range, undertaking prebreeding population shifts, rainfall-initiated shifts between coastal and interior wetlands and postbreeding dispersals inland over substantial distances. While year-round residents in much of their range, migration to more northerly breeding areas occurs in spring. Many of the erratic sightings of this species have occurred during the migration period and may represent misdirected birds in migration. However, sightings of out-of-range White Ibises are more common in summer and fall than spring and during these times immature birds far outnumber mature ones. Although the frequency of White Ibis sightings is very low in the Upper Midwest, most states in this region have at least one record. Observations have been noted in North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, and Illinois. A White Ibis was reported in Wisconsin in May, 1978, although the status of this bird is listed as hypothetical. The only states without observations or records in this region were Minnesota and Iowa.

The appearance of this White Ibis in Minnesota coincided with the arrival of a strong frontal system from the south that pushed into the Winona area earlier in the morning bringing much rain in its wake. It would seem reasonable to speculate that this front was responsible for depositing this first state bird in southeastern Minnesota. Although no other reports of White Ibises occurred during this period in the midwest, three reports of Glossy Ibis, another rare inland wanderer, were reported on the National Hotline Birding Cooperative: Ohio (5/6), Ontario (5/12) and Iowa (5/18).

May 13, 1995, was a long day of wind and rain that played havoc with our Winona County Big Day. It was hard to hear, let alone see, birds which were mostly undercover. However, to start a Big Day with a Minnesota state record and have it be as dramatic as a White ibis makes for a day we'll never forget.

References

Bent, A. C. (1963) Life Histories of North American Marsh Birds, Dover Publications, New York, NY, pp. 23–33.

DeSante, D. and Pyle, P. (1986) Distributional Checklist of North American Birds. Artemisia Press, Lee Vining, CA.

Kushlan, J. A. and Bildstein, K. L. (1993) "White Ibis", The Birds of North America, No. 9, Poole, A,, Stettenheim, P. and Gill, F., Eds., Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia and the American Ornithologists' Union, Philadelphia, PA.

7915 Western Ave, Golden Valley MN 55427; 1411 Skyline Dr., Winona MN 55987.

Obituary: Gustav A. Swanson

George Rysgaard

Dr. Gustav A. Swanson died at Ft. Collins, Colorado, on April 2, 1995, at the age of 85.

Dr. Swanson was born February 13, 1910, on a farm in Kandiyohi County, Minnesota. He attended the Minnehaha Academy and the University of Minnesota, where he received his B.S. degree in 1930, his M.S. degree in 1932, and his Ph.D. degree in 1934.

In 1936, he and Evadene Burris were married and spent a lifetime together pursuing their mutual interests of ornithology, history, natural history, art, and the many facets of ecology.

Gus, as most of his friends knew him, was a "bird-watcher" from the third grade in elementary school until the end of his life. During fifth grade, he teamed up with Charles Evans to do more serious bird study, and the two maintained a lifelong association.

In 1929, while an undergraduate at the University of Minnesota, he and other budding ornithologists and Dr. Walter Breckenridge created the Minnesota Bird Club, which Dr. Thomas S. Roberts encouraged to use the University of Minnesota Museum as their meeting place. During the preparation of Dr. Roberts' *Birds of Minnesota*, Gus Swanson prepared the phenology section, and in collaboration with Dr. Alden Risser, prepared the key to the shorebirds. Dr. Swanson was also an instructor in the University of Minnesota Extension-sponsored "bird class," as it was known. It was here that he met Evadene Burris, who was to become his wife April 11, 1936.

In 1937–38, he was influential in the organization of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union through the integration of the Minnesota Bird Club, the Duluth Bird Club, and the St. Cloud Bird Club.

Gus Swanson's first position after graduation was with the U.S. Soil and Erosion Service, followed by an assistant professorship at the University of Maine and the University of Minnesota. In 1944, he accepted a position with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service where, from 1946 to 1948, he was Chief of the Division of Wildlife Research in Washington, D.C. In 1948, he returned to academia when he became professor and head of the Department of Conservation at Cornell University, where he remained for 18 years and was director of Sapsucker Woods, among other duties. Gus culminated his years in the academic circle at Colorado State University in the Department of Fishery and Wildlife Biology, until his retirement in 1975.

Following his retirement from the academic field, he continued to write and teach through his writings for many publications.

During his lifetime, he was recognized as an international authority in ornithology, and in this capacity he was solicited to lead conferences or tours in many areas — Europe, Africa, South America, the Galapagos Islands, and elsewhere.

Dr. Gustav A. Swanson was the recipient of many recognitions and awards:

- Wildlife Management Invitational Lectures: Texas, New Mexico, Australia, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Patagonia, and South Africa.
- Member of the Board of Directors of the National Audubon Society.
- Member of the Selection Committee to search for the National Audubon Society president.
- Created Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union in 1941.
- President of The Wildlife Society and a charter member.
- Contributing editor of *Bird Watcher's Digest*.

• Recipient of the Dr. Thomas S. Roberts' Award from the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union.

• Recipient of the prestigious University of Minnesota Alumni Outstanding Achievement Award in 1989.

But this resume depicts just the scientific man. Gus was so much more, as all of us who knew him will attest. He was always there to support and encourage his students, assist in a co-worker's research project, and commiserate when a program did not go as planned. He was a human support, but still a disciplinarian of truth in research, with no compromise.

913 E 4th St., Northfield MN 55057.

Nest Observations: Louisiana Waterthrush, Acadian Flycatcher
Winona County 1994

Carol Schumacher

The summer of 1994 was an excellent one for finding the nests of some challenging species. (For Cerulean Warbler accounts see ***The Loon*** *67:1). The following accounts are of Louisiana Waterthrush and Acadian Flycatcher.*

Louisiana Waterthrush

On 26 June at 11:20 A.M. a Louisiana Waterthrush chipped twice. The first sounded richer and later was identified as an adult; the second was not quite as resonating and was from one of two immatures. Standing in the mud, then bobbing along were two juveniles accompanied by an adult.

One bird was seen being fed by the adult.

Both juveniles bobbed but their movement was less controlled than the adults. The juveniles moved more erratically at times and had more "spring" than the adults. Both juveniles followed the adult up an embankment.

Both juveniles seemed slightly smaller than the adult. Both were observed flying distances of ten feet and less. They settled by a puddle created by the previous nights rain and bobbed around. The adult flew further out of sight. This observation was for only 15 minutes.

One hour later another Louisiana Waterthrush chip was heard coming from deep ground cover within five feet of the previous sighting. Fifteen minutes later a juvenile flew to a small shrub. Both juveniles then flew across an open area, landing clumsily, on branches that angled to the water. One teetered on the branch and flew/fell off. Its tail jerked left to right as if helping it balance. They had returned to the spot where two days earlier an adult sang loudly with its characteristic punchy ending.

On 27 June at 9:25 A.M. a Louisiana Waterthrush was heard some 50 feet south of previous sightings. An adult popped up to a branch and sang at medium volume a song without the characteristic punchy ending notes. This seemed a truncated version of the basic song rather than a variation.

At 9:51 A.M. two Louisiana Waterthrushes popped up from the water's edge. One was a clean-lined adult. The other a recently fledged juvenile. The juvenile chipped and wagged its tail from left to right several times as if to balance on the branch. The breast was downy in some areas and the brown breast striping was uneven in length. As it turned sideways the supercilium was highlighted showing a ragged-looking quality. It was noticeably long and broad behind the eye... in fact it extended so far the line had an almost "wraparound" effect. The eyeline was unique enough to identify this bird in subsequent visits.

At additional visits several Louisiana Waterthrushes chipped from different areas. There appeared to be at least three broods. Often only parts of the birds were seen in the dense underbrush but I was unwilling to leave the path to pursue these family groups.

On 24 July a rich Louisiana Waterthrush chip was heard and an immature with a speckled and striped breast popped up. I thought this might be the last Louisiana Waterthrush of the season since sightings are infrequent in August and September. But on 3 September one was heard, then seen, on the creek. And on 9 September it was most interesting to hear two Louisiana Waterthrushes chip. One continued chipping out of sight while the other popped into view. It was the immature with the long flared, almost wraparound supercilium. Below, the bird sported the classic two tone white to cream/beige color gradation of a Louisiana Waterthrush.

Finding Louisiana Waterthrush nesting sights

A cold water stream and dense undergrowth appear to be requirements. This bird nests in banks near these streams and gleans food off rocks over which the water flows. Several may nest near each other along such streams. Eliason and Fall describe in detail nest preferences for this bird (***The Loon*** 61:34–37).

Comments on the Louisiana Waterthrush

After many observations of this bird, it's easier to see the degree of variability in individuals. This variability may present identification problems between the Louisiana and Northern Waterthrushes.

Challenges include:

Supercilium: there was a broad variation in the flare behind the eye on the Louisiana. Some were so narrow they could have passed for Northerns.

Color below: some showed very subtle changes on the Louisiana. Some showed almost no color variation.

Bill: larger on the Louisiana than the Northern. Again, this difference can be subtle.

Leg color: I found the Louisiana's pink legs brighter than a Northern's.

Throat markings: very seldom on the Louisiana did I find a clean throat. Sometimes the throat had light markings but more often the throat was just plain hard to see.

Acadian Flycatcher

On 27 June after 45 minutes the birds were still quiet... not even an Eastern Wood-Pewee called. Then out of silence came an emphatic piercingly loud "PEET-sa" of an Acadian Flycatcher. Standing in a frozen position under a tree I looked around slowly. Five feet ahead a small flycatcher perched ten feet up in a tree on the edge of an opening near the water.

The bird seemed smaller than an adult Acadian. A slight white eye ring was noticeable. Its throat was white and the greenish breast was very slightly streaked with smudges. Two wing bars were

noted with one two times the width of the other. These wing bars were not solidly white. There appeared to be a few dark gray feathers between several white ones, most noticeably on the second wing bar.

The bird pronounced its exclamation again. It was a strong flyer and flew through an opening in a direct line and out of sight. An immature or a female that had been sitting on a nest? Most probably a female considering that Acadian Flycatchers arrive mid-May, and an immature at this date with this flight ability would be unlikely.

On 28 June an Acadian Flycatcher was heard. A second call was heard and stood out in the that "peet-za" more slurred and less separated in sound quality. Between 29 June and 23 July Acadians were more often heard then seen.

On 24 July an adult Acadian Flycatcher called, then flew across a path. The next sound was not a call of an adult bird. This noise continued and within a few minutes the source was determined to be coming from a nest. The nest was obvious only when the adult carried food to three young. The nest, in an elm branch that overhung the path, was 15 feet off the ground, suspended from a one-inch branch, and out eight feet from the trunk. Its estimated size was 2 1/2 inches wide and 3 inches deep. Initially two juvenile heads could be seen. A not very emphatic "peet" was heard. It was so soft that it could have been mistaken for a soft warbler chip.

The adult foraged in the low dense understory. It perched higher than ten inches and most often at four feet before flying off for an insect. It didn't return to the same spot after unsuccessfully flying off for an insect but seemed to zigzag from one perch to another. I later read in *A Guide to the Birds of Costa Rica* (Stiles and Skutch, 1989) that this is a typical Acadian Flycatcher habit.

On 27 July at 10:30 A.M. two Acadian Flycatchers were seen in the dense understory. One's call sounded more like "feet," slightly higher in pitch than the first. I was unable to return to this site until mid-August and the birds had fledged by then.

On 26 August two Acadian Flycatchers were seen together, one adult, one immature. The wing bars on the immature were quite beige and this bird also flicked its tail ever so slightly. On 27 August an Acadian was relocated in the interior woods of this area, the last Acadian Flycatcher heard this season.

Finding nest locations for Acadian Flycatchers

Deep ravines, dense understory, moving water all seem essential. The dense understory is important as this small flycatcher out maneuvers other flycatchers which use exposed perches. This may be a developed feeding strategy so as to not compete with larger more common flycatchers. This criteria is met at Beaver Creek Valley State Park where Minnesota's first Acadian Flycatcher record occurred. Similar habitat exists in Elm Creek Nature Reserve, Hennepin County where there is a recent nest record.

Comments on Acadian Flycatchers

The habit of never returning to the same perch when feeding I had not noticed previously. This bird especially liked the interior of dense undergrowth, more so than any flycatcher known to me.

References

Bent, A. Life Histories of North American Wood Warblers, Part I and II, Dover Publications, New York, 1963.

Curson, J., Quinn, D., Beadle, D. Warblers of the Americas, Houghton Mifflin, New York, 1994.

Eliason, B. Fall, B., "Louisiana Waterthrushes in Washington County," ***The Loon*** 61:34–37.

Farrand, J. Jr. (Ed), The Audubon Master Guide to Birding Vol. III, Knoff, New York, 1989.

1411 Skyline Drive, Winona MN, 55987.

The Fall Season
(1 August to 30 November1994)

Steve Carlson, Oscar Johnson, Scott Krych, and Dick Ruhme

Foreword by Peder Svingen

The first Calliope Hummingbird to appear in Minnesota gave a totally unexpected cameo performance during the M.O.U. paper session in Minneapolis. Several outstanding rarities were only briefly seen but multitudes enjoyed a most obliging Sage Thrasher that remained in a Richfield community garden for nearly a week!

Fall 1994 in Minnesota lacked weather that is generally considered favorable for migration; across the state and especially along the North Shore unseasonably mild conditions persisted into December. The Lakewood Pumping Station census of fall migration (***The Loon*** 67:47–49) was resurrected after a three year hiatus and tallied only 59,333 migrants during 33 dates of counting between 21 August and 30 October. Only one significant snow storm swept through the state, on Thanksgiving weekend. The seasonal rhythm of successive cold fronts was syncopated at best, with crescendos only during the third week of October. At Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve in Duluth, Frank Nicoletti returned for his fourth season as official counter and unofficial "conductor" of the Bald Eagle Symphony which drew rave reviews.

In spite of these balmy conditions (or in some cases, because of?) an impressive list of rarities was compiled, although many were seen only briefly by a few observers. Predictably, record late dates were submitted for a variety of lingering migrants but especially warblers. Although he characterized the 1994 fall migration of warblers through the Twin Cities as "average," Steve Carlson noted a peak number of 20 species on 15 September with nine species still present on 16 October.

Red-throated Loon migration was again noteworthy. The four records (involving five individuals) included an exceptional record from Lake Waconia in Carver County. Fall records of this rare/Regular species are greatly outnumbered by those from late spring and early summer. The two records for **Pacific Loon** (which may have been the same individual) were paltry compared to last fall's six; both were along the North Shore of Lake Superior, where the vast majority of previous fall records have occurred. There are more than 20 records for this Casual species in the past 10 years; it would be a most handsome addition to the list of Regular species in Minnesota!

Most notable among the egrets was the **Snowy Egret** on 23 October, the latest date on record for the state and one of only two October records ever! The flock of 21 **Cattle Egrets** in Becker County was an unusual location; once again, the total number passing through the state could not be determined because numbers were not indicated on all reports.

Waterfowl migration received little comment from Seasonal Report contributors. Always unexpected in fall except for the western regions of the state, both location and flock size of the 47 **Greater White-fronted Geese** in Carver County

were startling. Only one **Ross' Goose** was reported this fall. The largest concentration of waterfowl ever documented in Minnesota occurred on 14 October, when an estimated **one million** Ring-necked Ducks (60%) and Mallards (40%) were present at Rice Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Aitkin Co. (***The Loon*** 67:38–39). The aerial count of **200,000 Canvasbacks** congregating on the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife Refuge by 15 November (*fide* CS) was encouraging; the total undoubtedly included birds in Wisconsin waters, so it cannot be cited as Minnesota's largest concentration ever. The two female or immature **King Eiders** just outside the Grand Marais harbor were difficult to observe and nearly impossible to relocate; this was about the twelfth record for Minnesota and the third recent record for Grand Marais. **Surf Scoters** were detected in at least five locations away from Lake Superior, more than usual. One of the largest "inland" flocks of **White–winged Scoters** ever reported in Minnesota (25) was discovered on Mille Lacs Lake. This same statement was made last fall, when 15 were found on White Bear Lake, Washington County.

Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve (HRNR) in Duluth startles us in some way every fall: records are made and trends emerge, the energy of seasonal change becomes crystalline in our senses and recapitulates our own existential migration. This season's totals for eagles were stratospheric! **Bald Eagles** increased from 582 in 1991, 982 in 1992, and 1725 in 1993, to 4368 in 1994. Record one-day high counts for "Baldies" were reset several times, climaxing at 743 on 22 November. **Northern Harriers** totaled 1390 for the season, breaking a record set in 1976! **Sharp-shinned Hawks** totaled 19,183 which was about a thousand less than last fall, but still within three thousand of the all-time record of 21,974 set in 1976; as concern mounts about populations migrating along the East Coast (American Birding Association newsletter, *Winging It*, September 1993 and June 1994) the counts at HRNR become even more important. **Golden Eagles** escalated to 133 this fall; the previous record was 69 in 1992 and a respectable 58 were tallied in 1993. The 23 Golden Eagles on 24 October was another new one-day high at HRNR while the 3991 **Red-tailed Hawks** there the same day is the highest daily count anywhere in North America, according to Frank Nicoletti (***The Loon*** 67:9–12). In addition to both eagle species, season-high records for both Red-tails (15,448) and **Rough-legged Hawks** were set; the latter (1011) broke a record of 739 set in 1975! Mr. Nicoletti counted "in the zone" and into late November (and several weeks after expiration of his contract!) but the total hours (1134) and total days (107) counting increased only slightly from 1993; his dedication alone cannot account for this influx of "the big boys." These data are courtesy of Molly Evans and HRNR.

Other than a few late dates, shorebird migration was uneventful. The **Spotted Sandpiper** at Sand Point, Goodhue Co. on 12 November provided the latest date on record for the state. It is unclear whether all the reports of **Red Knot** from Duluth between 24 August and 4 September referred to the same individual; the population status of this species remains uncertain. An excellent summary of the status of shorebirds in Canada (*Bird Trends*, No. 3, Winter 1993/1994) is available from the Canadian Wildlife Service; it estimates a stable or (more likely) declining Canadian population of knots while acknowledging limitations of the data regarding all shorebird populations. Compared to last fall's excellent flight, reports of **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** from only five counties were disappointing; the entire Canadian population has been estimated at only 5,000–10,000 birds (ibid.). Another record late date for Minnesota was the **Long-billed Dowitcher** in Stevens County on 12 November.

It was the best fall in several years for

jaegers; peak number was on 20 September when four (presumably all **Parasitic Jaegers**) accompanied a single **Pomarine Jaeger** in a loose flock off Park Point in Duluth, the first report of the latter species since 1982. The **Laughing Gull** in Otter Tail County on 19 October was unusually late compared to all other Minnesota records (late April–late August). More interesting was the **Common Black-headed Gull**, one of three found earlier in northwestern Iowa, that obligingly strayed briefly to the north end of Spirit Lake, thus providing a second record for both Minnesota and Jackson County. **Thayer's Gulls** arrived on the record early date of 5 October in Anoka County with several more in the metro area by mid-October. The adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull** returned to metro area lakes for its third consecutive year.

All dove species on the state list have now been recorded at HRNR! The state's second **White-winged Dove** cruised past the main overlook on 15 September. Late fall hummingbirds are always of interest, especially since rare species (cf. both Minnesota records for Anna's) are more likely. However, no one anticipated the appearance of a **Calliope Hummingbird** in the state! Anticipation is partly based on distribution and patterns of vagrancy which were not reviewed in the previous issue of ***The Loon***. Among states and provinces bordering Minnesota, only one (four records, all in the Black Hills, spanning 23 July–21 August) lists Calliope (South Dakota Ornithologists' Union, 1991, *The Birds of South Dakota*) and the species is virtually unknown north of Mexico in winter, except for vagrants in Louisiana.

The Calliope Hummingbird breeds in the mountains of western North America, as far north as central interior British Columbia and southwestern Alberta, and east to northern Wyoming, western Colorado and Utah. In migration, the species is only casual east to southwestern Saskatchewan, Nebraska, Kansas, and western and central Texas (American Ornithologists' Union, 1983, *Checklist of North American Birds*, 6th edition). In 1994, possibly in response to lack of wildflowers due to drought in the West, hummingbirds, especially Calliope, were numerous and widespread in eastern Colorado (H. E. Kingery, 1994, S.A. in *American Birds* 48:968). Nebraska's fourth state record of Calliope Hummingbird was a male in Sioux County on 23 June (*American Birds* 49:66) and one (female?) strayed to Finney County, Kansas on 20 July (*American Birds* 48:959). The unusual number of Calliope Hummingbirds noted during the summer in Colorado, as well as in multiple Texas locales, persisted into fall (*American Birds* 49:70,76). Late fall produced Minnesota's record, plus at least three more November vagrants cited in American Birds: one adult male on the 5th in St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana, one banded on the 7th in Hays County, Texas (southwest of Austin), and one discovered on the 12th in Iberville Parish, Louisiana.

Yet another record late date was set by the **Eastern Wood-Pewee** in Winona County. The account of Minnesota's third **Vermilion Flycatcher** in Kandiyohi County captures the excitement of finding and documenting rare birds. The two **Scissor-tailed Flycatchers** in October were the only records all year. The **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** through 28 October in Winona County was briefly a record late date, before one appeared on 6 November in Grand Marais, Cook County! The total of nine **Townsend's Solitaires** reported equaled the fall 1992 total, which heralded the record invasion of 1992-1993; only one of this fall's birds was found away from the North Shore of Lake Superior. The **Sage Thrasher** in Richfield was definitely the most watched of the six now recorded in the state.

Undoubtedly in response to mild conditions, a litany of late vireos and warblers was reported statewide. New record late dates were set for **Philadelphia Vireo, Blue-winged Warbler, Bay-**

breasted Warbler, and **Connecticut Warbler.** More (approximately a dozen) than the usual number of **Black-throated Blue Warblers** were detected as migrants this fall, including a 10 September report from Clay County. Exciting were the **Black-throated Gray Warbler** documented by a photographer in Chisago County (fourth state record) and the **Yellow-throated Warbler** (also photographed) in Washington County.

Steve Carlson's analysis of fall warbler migration through the Twin Cities is based upon near-daily counts for more than a decade! **Northern Parula**, **Black-throated Green Warbler** and **Canada Warbler** all returned to near "normal" levels after last year's drop. **Magnolia Warbler** and **Black-and-white Warbler** numbers stabilized but remained below 1991 and 1992 levels. **Blackburnian Warblers** and **American Redstarts** declined again through the Twin Cities but the most dramatic declines were documented for **Bay-breasted Warbler** and **Wilson's Warbler**.

Our ability to understand statewide population trends during migration is limited by lack of data and lack of standardized data analyses. One observer birding with consistent effort in the same location over many migrations can make an impact! My thanks to Steve Carlson for continuing to report his data. Hopefully, the spring and fall seasonal reports will contain more data on peak dates of migration, peak numbers of birds, patterns of migration compared to previous seasons, and population trends in Minnesota over a period of years. Observers are still asked to report earliest and latest dates but these will receive less emphasis in future seasonal reports.

Finally, Oscar Johnson has decided to retire as one of our Seasonal Report compilers. Oscar compiled his first Seasonal Report for the Summer 1979 Issue of ***The Loon***, when he, Don Bolduc and Dick Ruhme put together the 1978 Fall Seasonal Report. This was the first issue where more than one individual compiled the report — an arrangement that continues today. Oscar's contributions are much appreciated, and we would like to thank him for his nearly twenty years of dedication to a most difficult task.

Thanks are due to the many observers, compilers, and editors who make this report possible. Also, to Kim Eckert and Anthony Hertzel who report data from the Duluth and statewide hotlines.

2602 E 4th St., Duluth MN 55812.

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 bold **(10/9)** indicate an occurrence either earlier, later or within the earliest or latest dates on file.
3. Counties listed in bold **(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.

The Season publishes reports of bird sightings from 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, request a report form from the Editor of *The Season*, Peder Svingen, 2602 East 4th St, Duluth, MN 55812.

Red-throated Loon
Reported from Duluth 9/20-22 PS *et al*, 10/22 St. Louis (2) MOc *et al*, 10/25 Lake DPV, 11/9–13, Carver RG, AB.

PACIFIC LOON
Reported 10/29–30 Lake KE *et al*, **11/8–12** St. Louis KE.

Common Loon
Late north 11/19 Becker BK, 11/20 Aitkin WN, 11/24 Beltrami AB. Late south 11/16 Carver TEB, 11/17 Hennepin SC, 11/19 Rice TB.

Pied-billed Grebe
Late north 11/25 Kanabec CM, **11/29** Beltrami DJ, **11/30** St. Louis KE. Late south 11/20 Carver DBM, 11/25 Hennepin SC, 11/27 Washington WL.

Horned Grebe
Late north 10/23 St. Louis SS, 11/4 Itasca JB/TS, 11/5 Cook MH. Late south 11/11 Washington WL, 11/12 Stevens RJ, 11/21 Hennepin SC.

Red-necked Grebe
Late north 10/22 TBr, 11/6 Lake KE, MH, and Otter Tail DS. South reports 8/11 Sibley RJ, 10/10 Hennepin WM.

Eared Grebe
Late north 10/10 Marshall KSS, 10/22 Pennington RJ. Late south 10/5 Anoka KB, 11/5 LeSueur RJ, 11/9 Lac Qui Parle DN.

Western Grebe
Late north 10/21 Otter Tail DS, 10/22 Lake of the Woods PS, **11/21** Douglas KL. Late south 10/20 Lyon HK, 11/2 Kandi-yohi RG, **11/30** Hennepin RJ.

American White Pelican
Late north 10/6 Beltrami DJ, 10/8 Douglas DN, 10/10 Traverse KB. Late south 11/19 Winona JD, FL, 11/22 Dakota RG, 11/25 Murray ND.

Double-crested Cormorant
Late north 11/5 Aitkin WN, 11/21 Beltrami AB, **11/30** Lake CMG. Late south 11/20 Kandiyohi RF, 11/22 Dakota RG, 11/30 Washington TEB.

American Bittern
Reported 8/26 Beltrami DJ, 9/7 Hennepin SK, 9/11 Aitkin WN, 9/26 Olmsted JW, 10/10 Crow Wing DS.

Least Bittern
Reported from Hennepin 8/4 CF and 9/2 SC.

Great Blue Heron
Late north 10/29 Aitkin WN, 10/31 Otter Tail CS, 11/10 Douglas RH. Late south 11/12 Carver CS and Rock ND, 11/20 Kandiyohi RF.

Great Egret
Late north 9/15 Marshall KSS, 10/8 Douglas DN, **10/22** Clay CF. Late south 11/16 Hennepin DC and Ramsey RH, 11/20 Washington DS.

Snowy Egret
Reported **10/23** (latest date on record) Winona JW.

Cattle Egret
Reported 8/? Kandiyohi (40) RF, 10/19 Becker BBe (21) *fide*, 10/23 Wabasha (5) JW, 10/28 Olmsted (2) JW, 10/30 Dakota *fide* PB.

Green Heron
No reports?

Black-crowned Night Heron
Late north 8/20 Otter Tail DN, 10/8 Douglas DN. Late south 9/27 Washington DS, 9/29 Dakota TT, 10/18 Hennepin DB.

IBIS (sp?)
Reported 9/10 Weaver, Wabasha Co. JW *et al.*

Tundra Swan
Early north **9/17** Roseau PS, 9/23 St. Louis SS. Early south 10/1 Chippewa AB, 10/19 Houston EMF. Late north 11/25 Aitkin CMG and Kanabec CM. Late south

11/30 Houston FL and Winona CS.

[Trumpeter Swan]
Reported 11/9–10 St. Louis *fide* KE.

Mute Swan
Reported 11/14 Rice (2) FKS.

Greater White-fronted Goose
Reported **9/10–18** Aitkin (2) WN, 10/2 Carver (47) WM, 10/22 Douglas (20) DN, 11/1 Lac Qui Parle AB, 11/19 Olmsted JW.

Snow Goose
Early north 8/8 Lake *fide* MH, 9/17 Roseau PS and St. Louis TBr. Early south 8/13 Jackson KE, 8/30 Rice FKS. Late north 11/19 Aitkin WN, 11/30 St. Louis KE. Late south 11/19 Olmsted JW, 11/26 Anoka SC.

Ross' Goose
Reported 10/5 Dakota (1) SW.

Canada Goose
Reported from 18 counties north, 24 counties south.

Wood Duck
Late north 11/2 Beltrami DJ, 11/4 Becker BBe, 11/12 Aitkin WN. Late south 11/24 Hennepin SC, 11/30 Rice FKS and Winona CS.

Green-winged Teal
Late north 10/21 Polk KSS, 10/22 Otter Tail RH, 11/6 Cook MH. Late south 11/21 Houston FL, 11/26 Hennepin WM, 11/30 Winona CS.

American Black Duck
Late north 11/11 Marshall KSS, 11/19 St. Louis SS, 11/30 Cook KMH. Late south 11/19 Winona JD, 11/29 Washington TEB, 11/30 Ramsey DS.

Mallard
Reported from 16 counties north, 24 counties south.

Northern Pintail
Late north 10/15 Aitkin WN, 10/29 Douglas DN, 11/5 Otter Tail DS. Late south 11/17 Dakota SK, 11/19 Hennepin SC, DN, TT, and Winona JD.

Blue-winged Teal
Late north 10/6 Aitkin DN, 10/8 Douglas DN, 10/22 Otter Tail RH. Late south 10/21 Houston JD, 10/22 Hennepin SC, 11/18 Freeborn RJ.

Northern Shoveler
Late north 9/24 Clay CF, 10/10 Marshall KSS, 10/22 Otter Tail RH. Late south 11/24 Houston FL, 11/29 Winona CS, 11/30 Hennepin PBu, RJ.

Gadwall
Late north 10/10 Marshall KSS. Late south 11/19 Winona JD, FL, 11/30 Hennepin PBu and Kandiyohi RF.

American Wigeon
Late north 10/22 Douglas DN, 10/23 Cook SOL, 11/24 Beltrami AB. Late south 11/21 Washington DS, 11/24 Hennepin SC, 11/30 Wabasha CS.

Canvasback
Late north 10/29 Beltrami DJ, 11/2 Douglas DN, 11/27 Kanabec CM. Late south 11/30 Ramsey DS, Wabasha CS and Washington TEB.

Redhead
Late north 11/6 Cook MH, 11/24 Beltrami AB, 11/25 Otter Tail CSc. Late south 11/11 Houston DN, 11/16 Carver TEB, 11/25 Washington WL.

Ring-necked Duck
Late north 11/25 Otter Tail CSc, 11/26 Beltrami AB, 11/27 Kanabec CM. Late south 11/25 Anoka CF, 11/30 Ramsey DS and Wabasha CS.

Greater Scaup
Late north 11/5 Lake MH, 11/11 Marshall KSS, **11/26** Crow Wing AB. Late south 11/13 Renville RJ, 11/18 Hennepin DSM, 11/19 Olmsted JW.

Lesser Scaup
Late north 11/19 Becker BK, 11/27 Kana-

bec CM, 11/30 Beltrami DJ. Late south 11/26 Hennepin SC, 11/30 Ramsey DS and Wabasha CS.

KING EIDER
Reported **11/28–30** Grand Marais, Cook Co. (2) MB, KE *et al* (***The Loon*** 67:62–63).

Harlequin Duck
Reported 8/24 Minneapolis, Hennepin Co. JBe, 9/28–10/30 Cook mob, 11/8-**11/26** St. Louis mob.

Oldsquaw
Reported 10/22 and 11/6 Cook, TBr, PBu, MH, 10/29 Lake mob, 11/5–6 Scott (1) RG, AH, DM, 11/10 Washington (3) WL, 11/24 Beltrami (1) AB.

Black Scoter
Reported 9/21–**11/30** Cook mob, 10/4–30 St. Louis mob, 11/12 Mille Lacs (1) AH.

Surf Scoter
All reports: 9/26–11/5 Cook mob, 10/10 Anoka (1) KB, 10/14 Ramsey (3) KB, 10/21 Otter Tail (4) DS, 10/29 Hennepin (1) PBu, SC, **11/19** Wabasha (1) BF.

White-winged Scoter
Reported 10/8–11/12 (max. 25) Aitkin TBr, PBu, 5 reports 10/10–11/10 Cook mob, 11/5 Lake MH, 11/11 Washington (3) RH, JoW, 11/12 Mille Lacs AH, 11/25 Winona (1) CS.

Common Goldeneye
Early south 10/18 Olmsted JB, 10/22 Hennepin TBr, 10/25 Ramsey RH.

Bufflehead
Early north 10/1 Otter Tail CSc, 10/15 Pine RJ and St. Louis ME. Early south 10/6 Stearns KB, 10/8 Chippewa AB. Late north 11/30 Aitkin CMG, Beltrami DJ. Late south 11/30 Ramsey DS and Winona CS.

Hooded Merganser
Late north 11/20 St. Louis TW, 11/26 Beltrami AB, **11/30** Aitkin CMG. Late south 11/26 Hennepin RH and Martin BB, 11/30 Olmsted JB and Rice FKS.

Common Merganser
Early south 9/9 Carver MB, 10/22 Hennepin TBr, 11/9 Rice OR and Washington WL.

Red-breasted Merganser
Late north 10/29 Itasca DB, 10/31 Cook SOL, 11/24 Hubbard AB. Late south 11/10 Carver JW, 11/22 Hennepin SC, 11/29 Washington WL.

Ruddy Duck
Late north 10/21 Douglas RH, 10/27 Aitkin DN, 11/5 Otter Tail DS. Late south 11/18 Freeborn RJ, Hennepin SC and Rice TB.

Turkey Vulture
Hawk Ridge count: 841, about 50% of 1993 record. Late north 9/25 Becker BK, 10/2 Kanabec CM, **11/22** and **11/26** Duluth FN (***The Loon*** 67:2118). Late south 10/9 Hennepin SC, 10/16 Brown JS, 10/21 Houston JD, FL.

Osprey
Hawk Ridge count: 315 (475 l.y.). Late north 10/13 Hawk Ridge, 10/15 Pine RG, RJ, **11/25** Clearwater MJ. Late south 10/8 Swift AB, 10/21 Rice OR, **11/25** Washington DS.

MISSISSIPPI KITE
Reported 8/6 **Roseau** (ad.) AH, PS, (***The Loon*** 67:119), 9/16 Anoka (imm.) KB (***The Loon*** 66:214–215).

Bald Eagle
Hawk Ridge count: **4,368**, more than double 1993 record. 10/31 (410), 11/19 (578), 11/22 (**733**), all record high day counts in North America. Late north 11/30 Aitkin CMG, Beltrami DJ, Cook KMH.

Northern Harrier
Hawk Ridge count: **1,390**, a new record. Late north 11/20 Kanabec CM, 11/24 Hawk Ridge, 11/25 Koochiching AB. Late south 11/11 Washington TEB, 11/13 Carver DBM, 11/14 Houston EMF.

Sharp-shinned Hawk
Hawk Ridge count: 19,183. Late north 11/19 Aitkin WN, 11/23 Kanabec CM, 11/29 Hawk Ridge. Late south 11/18 Freeborn RJ, 11/20 Murray ND, **11/30** Washington DS.

Cooper's Hawk
Hawk Ridge count: 172, 50% of 1993. Late north 10/1 Becker BBe, **10/31** Hawk Ridge, **11/24** Pennington AB. Late south 10/31 Wabasha CS, 11/3 Brown JS, **11/28** Washington WL.

Northern Goshawk
Hawk Ridge count: 274, down sharply. Early north 8/14 St. Louis MH, 9/3 Cook KMH, 10/16 Wilkin SDM. Early south 10/21 Hennepin OJ and Houston JD, 11/9 Scott DBM.

Red-shouldered Hawk
Hawk Ridge count: 3. Late north 10/1 Becker DN, 10/19 Aitkin CMG, 10/29 Hawk Ridge. Late south 11/2 Washington WL, 11/4 Olmsted AP, 11/14 Wabasha CS.

Broad-winged Hawk
Hawk Ridge count: 51,383, down 50% from 1993. Late north 9/17 Cook KMH, 10/1 Aitkin WN, 10/25 Hawk Ridge. Late south 9/27 Hennepin TT, 10/6 Ramsey RH, 10/8 Houston JD, FL.

Swainson's Hawk
Hawk Ridge count: 7. Late north 9/18 Hawk Ridge. Late south 9/17 Hennepin KB, 9/24 Olmsted JW, 10/1 Swift RG, RJ.

Red-tailed Hawk
Hawk Ridge count: **15,448**, a new high; peak 10/24 (**3,991**), a record one-day count for North America. Reported from 14 counties north, 26 counties south.

Ferruginous Hawk
Reported 8/28 Red Lake KSS, 9/19 Dakota TT.

Rough-legged Hawk
Hawk Ridge count: **1,011**, a new record high. Early north **8/19** Becker BBe, **9/4** Cook SOL, 10/7 Polk DS. Early south 9/24 Wabasha CS, 10/9 Hennepin SC, 10/20 Rice TB.

Golden Eagle
Hawk Ridge count: **133,** another new high. Early south **9/15** Anoka CO, 10/27 Sherburne DBM, 10/30 Wabasha CS. Late north 10/29 Lake WM, 11/22 Norman KL, 12/4 Hawk Ridge.

American Kestrel
Hawk Ridge count: 2,391. Late north 10/31 Becker BBe, 11/5 Aitkin WN, 11/26 Kanabec CM.

Merlin
Hawk Ridge count: **453**, a record high. Late north 11/5 Lake KMH, KE, and Wilkin CF, 11/24 Pennington AB. Late south 10/17 Hennepin TBr, 10/25 Ramsey TT, 11/2 Goodhue OR.

Prairie Falcon
Reported **8/6** Roseau AH, PS, **8/13 Cass** RG, 10/19 Wilkin AH, 10/23–**11/6** Hennepin mob.

Peregrine Falcon
Hawk Ridge count: 50, down 30%. Late north 9/25 Aitkin AB and Pennington KB, 9/26 Lake of the Woods KB, 10/18 Hawk Ridge. Late south 10/3 Dakota RG, 11/4 Ramsey RH, 11/30 Hennepin SC.

Gray Partridge
Reported from only two counties north, five counties south.

Ring-necked Pheasant
Reported from three north and 17 south counties.

Spruce Grouse
All reports: Itasca (no date) AB, 8/18 Cook SOL and from Whyte Road, Spruce Road, Tomahawk Trail, and County Road 2, Lake County KE, mob.

Ruffed Grouse
Reported from 14 north and five counties in the south.

Greater Prairie-Chicken
All reports: 10/5 Felton Prairie, Clay Co. (30+) CF, 10/26 (27) Wilkin, mob (50+ booming at Rothsay WMA on 10/23 KE).

Sharp-tailed Grouse
Only reports: 10/15 Koochiching AB and Aitkin WN.

Wild Turkey
Reported from seven south counties.

Yellow Rail
Only report: 8/27 Cass SK.

Virginia Rail
Only report north: 9/15 Kanabec CM. Reported from five south counties.

Sora
Late north 9/10 Aitkin WN, 9/17 St. Louis TBr, 9/22 Roseau PS. Late south (only reports) 9/17 Hennepin County KB and Kandiyohi RF.

Common Moorhen
All reports: 8/27–9/28 Wood Lake Nature Center, Hennepin Co. (max 2) mob, Anoka (no dates) mob, 9/10 Winona JW, 9/25 Wright (3) ES.

American Coot
Late north 10/10 Polk KSS, 10/15 Aitkin WN, 11/15 Kanabec CM. Late south 11/16 Carver TEB, 11/18 Freeborn RJ, 11/28 Hennepin RH.

Sandhill Crane
Reported from ten north counties. Late north 11/11 Pine CM, **11/12** Norman CF. Late south 10/20 Kandiyohi RF, **11/15** Washington MB.

Black-bellied Plover
Late north 9/27 Pennington KS, 10/8 Douglas DN, 10/19 St. Louis TW. Late south 11/11 Dodge JW and McLeod TT, 11/13 McLeod RG.

American Golden Plover
Late north 9/13 Cook KMH, 9/26 St. Louis MG, 10/6 Douglas KB. Late south 10/16 Watonwan RJ, 10/29 Sherburne DBM, 11/6 Brown JS.

Semipalmated Plover
All reports from the north: 8/18 St. Louis MH, 8/26 St. Louis TW. Late south 8/20 Stevens FJ, 9/16 Olmsted JW, **10/8** Lac Qui Parle AB.

Killdeer
Late north 10/15 Kanabec FJ, 10/20 Beltrami DJ, 10/22 Cook BC. Late south 11/11 Rock ND and Houston FL, **11/29** Winona CS.

American Avocet
Only report: **10/22** Cottonwood County (2) ED.

Greater Yellowlegs
Late north 9/17 Beltrami DJ, 9/18 Aitkin WN, 10/2 Clay CF. Late south 11/9 Rock ND, 11/12 Goodhue BL, 11/12 Stevens, RG, RJ.

Lesser Yellowlegs
Late north 9/17 Beltrami DJ, 9/20 Grant CF, 10/10 Marshall KSS; late south 11/3 Chippewa AB, 11/5 Blue Earth RJ, 11/7 Brown JS.

Solitary Sandpiper
Late north 8/17 Clay FL, 9/4 Becker DJ. Late south 9/7 Washington WL, 9/17 Martin RJ, 9/24 Olmsted JW.

Willet
All reports: mid-August Kandiyohi (1) RJ, 8/14 Big Stone (1) TBr.

Spotted Sandpiper
Late north 9/25 Beltrami DJ, 10/8 Pine DW, **10/22** Cass RG/RJ (2nd latest date north and 5th latest for state). Late south 9/22 Dakota KB/SC, 10/12 Winona CS, **11/2** Goodhue BL (record late date).

Upland Sandpiper
Only report: **10/1** Lake KE.

Whimbrel
All reports: 9/21–25 St. Louis (5) AH, KE.

Marbled Godwit
Only report: 8/14 Jackson KE.

Ruddy Turnstone
Only report: 8/23 Carver RJ.

Red Knot
Only report: 8/24–9/4 St. Louis (1) mob.

Sanderling
Only report north: 8/8–9/24 St. Louis mob. All south reports: 8/14 Winona CS, 9/10 Wabasha JW.

Semipalmated Sandpiper
All reports north: 8/6 St. Louis MH, 8/9 Beltrami DJ, 8/20 Cook FKS, 8/28 Clay CF, 8/29 St. Louis TW and Roseau PS. Late south 8/27 Martin BB, 8/28 Sherburne RJ, 9/16 Chippewa KB.

Least Sandpiper
Late north 8/20 Cook FKS, 8/28 Clay CF, 9/27 Pennington KSS. Late south 8/13 Winona CS, 8/28 Carver PB, 10/6 Traverse KB.

White-rumped Sandpiper
All reports: 8/12 St. Louis KE, 8/5 Carver TBr.

Baird's Sandpiper
Late north 8/24 Clearwater RJ, 9/15 St. Louis TW, 9/27 Pennington KSS. Late south 8/20 Carver SK, 9/16 Lac Qui Parle KB, 10/8 Lac Qui Parle AB.

Pectoral Sandpiper
Late north 9/10 Clay CF, 10/29 St. Louis SS, 10/30 Cook KE. Late south 11/11 McLeod TT, 11/12 Goodhue BL and Stevens RJ.

Dunlin
All reports north: 8/12–9/24 St. Louis mob. Late south 11/3 McLeod FG, **11/11** McLeod TT, **11/12** Stevens RG/RJ.

Stilt Sandpiper
Late north 8/28 St. Louis CM and Clay CF, **9/27** Pennington KSS. Late south 8/25 Renville RJ, 9/9 Carver MB, 9/10 Olmsted JW.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper
Reported from only five counties, fewer than 1993; peak 8/27 Carver (21) mob. Also reported from Chippewa, Sibley, Dakota, and St. Louis counties, mob.

Short-billed Dowitcher
Late north 8/12 St. Louis MH, 8/17 Clay FL, **9/16** St. Louis TBr. Early south 8/5 LeSueur RJ, Watonwan BB, and Carver TBr. Late south 8/20 Stevens RJ and Carver SK, 8/21 Watonwan BB.

Long-billed Dowitcher
All reports north: 10/6 Douglas KB. Late south 10/16 Watonwan RJ, 10/29 Benton Dbr, **11/12** Stevens (1) RG/RJ (record late date).

Common Snipe
All reports from the north: 10/15 Carlton LW, 10/16 Aitkin TT. Late south 11/3 Chippewa AB, 11/9 Lac Qui Parle DN, 11/11 Rock ND.

American Woodcock
Late north 11/6 Pine CM and Cook SOL. All reports south: 10/8 Houston EMF, 10/30 Winona CS, 11/6 Mower RRK.

Wilson's Phalarope
All reports: 8/5 Carver PBu, TBr, 8/20 Stevens (20) RG/RJ.

Red-necked Phalarope
All north reports: 8/13 Hubbard RG/RJ, 8/22 Cass RJ, 8/23 Lake of the Woods RJ. Late south 8/20 Stevens RG, 8/27 Carver PBu, KE, 9/18 Anoka DZ.

Parasitic Jaeger
Numbers up from 1993; 9/10–10/15 St. Louis mob, peak 9/20 St. Louis (4) PS.

POMARINE JAEGER
First report in 12 years, 9/20 Park Point, St. Louis County, PS (***The Loon*** 66:209–210).

LAUGHING GULL
Reported **10/19** Otter Tail, AH (***The Loon*** 66:216).

Franklin's Gull
Late north 10/19 Kanabec AH, 10/21 Douglas RH, **11/12** Cook DJ. Late south 11/1 Swift AB, 11/12 McLeod RG, 11/13 Meeker RJ.

COMMON BLACK-HEADED GULL
Reported Jackson 8/4 AH. Second state record (***The Loon*** 67:54–56).

Bonaparte's Gull
Late north 10/28 St. Louis SDM, 11/17 Beltrami DJ, 11/20 Aitkin WN. Late south 11/18 Brown JS, 11/20 Carver DBM, **11/30** Hennepin PBu.

Ring-billed Gull
Reported from 13 north and 19 south counties.

Herring Gull
Reported from six north and five south counties.

Thayer's Gull
Early north **10/17** Cook PS, 10/29 Cook WM. Early south **10/5** Anoka (2) KB (record early fall date; previous record 10/8), **10/11** Hennepin KB (***The Loon*** 67:113–114).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL
Reported 11/16 Hennepin SC, mob (***The Loon*** 67:63–64).

Probable Glaucous X Herring Gull
Minnesota's first "Nelson's Gull," 10/17 Cook PS/KE (***The Loon*** 66:196–197).

Glaucous Gull
Early south 11/30 Hennepin PBu, RJ.

Caspian Tern
Late north 8/20 Otter Tail SDM, 8/24 Aitkin WN, 9/17 St. Louis TBr. Late south 9/13 Hennepin SK, 9/19 Washington PS, 9/22 Dakota SC.

Common Tern
Late north 8/23 Lake of the Woods RJ, 8/26 Clearwater AB, 9/9 Aitkin CMG. Late south 8/18 Hennepin SC, 8/22 Chippewa County AB.

Forster's Tern
Late north 9/27 Lake of the Woods KB, 10/6 Douglas KB, **10/9** Becker DJ. Late south 9/10 Blue Earth LF, 9/16 LeSueur RG, 9/16 Lac Qui Parle KB.

Black Tern
Late north 8/17 Clay FL, 8/20 Grant DN, 8/21 Aitkin WN. Late south 8/26 LeSueur RG, 9/16 Lac Qui Parle KB.

Rock Dove
Reported from 13 north and 22 south counties.

Mourning Dove
Reported from 12 north and 24 south counties.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE
Second state record, 9/15 Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve, St. Louis Co., FN *et al* (***The Loon*** 66:213–214). The first state record was also during a migration census (Lakewood Pumping Station) in Duluth on 10/13/85.

Black-billed Cuckoo
All north reports: 8/22 Becker RJ, 10/1 Clay CF. Late south 8/27 Olmsted JW, 9/7 Hennepin SK, 10/13 Rice TB.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo
All reports: 8/15 Jackson KE, 8/29 Hennepin SC, CB, 8/30 Winona CS, 9/17 Brown JS and Kandiyohi RF.

Eastern Screech Owl
Reported from Hennepin, Dakota, Steele, and Faribault counties.

Great Horned Owl
Reported from 14 south and 13 north counties.

Snowy Owl
All reports: 11/26 St. Louis TW, TB.

Barred Owl
Reported from 11 counties in the south

and eight counties in the north.

Great Gray Owl
All reports: Sax-Zim Bog, St. Louis Co., KE, Whyte Road, Lake Co., KE.

Long-eared Owl
All reports: 10/9 St. Louis TW, 10/14 Hennepin AH, 11/5 Freeborn RG/RJ, 11/14 Lac Qui Parle KE, 11/29 Hennepin MK.

Short-eared Owl
All reports: 10/4 St. Louis MO *et al*, 10/24 St. Louis SM, 11/29 St. Louis FN (4th latest date north).

Northern Saw-whet Owl
Reported from Becker, St. Louis, Hennepin, and Brown counties; a total of 980 individuals were banded at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve for the second highest total (1,102 individuals were banded in 1989).

Common Nighthawk
Late north 8/24 Beltrami DJ, 9/10 Aitkin CMG, **10/14** Otter Tail SDM. Late south 10/5 Rice TB, 10/7 Brown JS, 10/11 Anoka DW.

Whip-poor-will
Late north 8/20 Lake of the Woods KSS, 8/28 Otter Tail CSC, 9/16 Cook SOL. Late south **10/6** Stearns KB, **10/13** Ramsey TT, **10/20** Hennepin AB (all latest dates on record).

Chimney Swift
Late north 8/20 Lake of the Woods KSS, 8/21 Aitkin WN, 9/13 Kanabec CM; late south 10/6 Stearns KB, 10/13 Ramsey TT, **10/20** Hennepin AB.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Late north 9/16 Becker BBe, 9/20 Koochiching GM, 9/21 Cook KMH. Late south **10/6** Chippewa AB, **10/13** Mower RRK, **11/8** Dakota *fide* PB (immature male killed when it hit a window). One female **11/13–12/7** Goodhue *fide* RJ (***The Loon*** 66:213) is the latest date on record.

CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD
First observed by birders 11/30 Minneapolis, Hennepin Co., JHe, TT, mob, first state record (***The Loon*** 67:3–8).

Belted Kingfisher
Late north 10/22 Otter Tail RH, 10/23 St. Louis SS, 11/5 Aitkin WN. Late south 11/5 Blue Earth RJ, 11/19 Olmsted JW, 11/29 Washington TEB.

Red-headed Woodpecker
Reported from seven north and 15 south counties.

Red-bellied Woodpecker
Reported from Pennington, Clay, Wilkin, Aitkin, and Kanabec counties in the north, plus 16 south counties.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Late north 10/14 Itasca AB, 10/22 Clay CF, **11/23** St. Louis MH (latest date north on record). Late south 10/12 Houston EMF, 10/20 Winona CS, **11/28** Washington MH.

Downy Woodpecker
Reported from 25 south and 18 north counties.

Hairy Woodpecker
Reported from 25 south and 18 north counties.

Three-toed Woodpecker
All reports: 9/24 Itasca AB, 11/5 Lima Mountain Road, Cook Co., DB.

Black-backed Woodpecker
All reports: 9/9–11/20 Cook KMH, SOL, 9/10 Clearwater BF, 9/17–11/22 St. Louis ("numbers up") KE, mob, 10/3 and 11/5 Itasca DB, AB.

Northern Flicker
Reported from 16 north and 27 south counties. Late north 10/31 Aitkin CMG, 11/4 Cook SOL.

Pileated Woodpecker
Reported from 15 counties in the north

and 19 counties in the south.

Olive-sided Flycatcher
Early south **8/5** Hennepin SC, 8/8 Brown JS and McLeod DW. Late north 9/4 Otter Tail SDM, 9/6 Carlton LW and Kanabec CM. Late south 9/15 Hennepin SC, 9/19 Dakota TT.

Eastern Wood-Pewee
Late north 9/7 Beltrami DJ, 9/8 Carlton LW and Kanabec CM, 9/17 Clay CF. Late south 9/25 Hennepin SC, 10/1 Olmsted AP, **10/11** (latest date on record) Winona CS.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
Early south 8/13 Ramsey RH, 8/14 Hennepin SC. Late north 8/27 Clay CF, 9/13 Cook KMH. Late south 9/15 Brown JS, 9/21 Anoka KB.

Acadian Flycatcher
All reports: 8/4 (feeding young in nest) - 8/9 (young fledged) Rice TB, 8/6–20 Hennepin 8/18 (adult feeding 2 fledged young) OJ, **8/27** Winona CS.

Alder Flycatcher
Late north 8/2 Beltrami DJ, 8/7 Aitkin WN, 8/11 St. Louis SS. Late south 8/24 Hennepin DB, 8/25 Brown JS, 8/27 Ramsey RJ.

Willow Flycatcher
No north reports. Late south 9/11 Carver AB, 9/16 Washington TEB, 9/20 Anoka KB and Houston EMF.

Least Flycatcher
Late north 9/16 Aitkin WN and Pennington KSS, 9/18 Beltrami DJ, 9/19 Kanabec CM. Late south 9/17 Martin RJ, 9/24 Brown JS, 9/25 Hennepin SC.

Eastern Phoebe
Late north 10/5 Clay SDM, 10/9 Aitkin CMG, **10/19** St. Louis KE. Late south 10/14 Houston EMF, 10/15 Goodhue BL, 10/23 Hennepin mob and Winona JW.

VERMILION FLYCATCHER
11/25–27 Kandiyohi (immature female, photographed) JWC, RF (third state record, ***The Loon*** 67:57–59).

Great Crested Flycatcher
Late north 8/26 Clearwater AB, 8/27 Clay CF, 9/19 Kanabec CM. Late south 9/10 Blue Earth LF and Brown JS, 9/24 Winona CS, **10/4** Hennepin JBe.

Western Kingbird
Reported from nine counties (three last year). Late north 8/17 Clay FL and Marshall DB, 9/6 Duluth FN, 9/9 **Cook** KMH. Late south 8/23 Sherburne AB, **9/14** Hennepin SK, **9/26** Olmsted JW.

Eastern Kingbird
Late north 9/10 Clay CF, 9/11 Aitkin WN, 9/13 Kanabec CM. Late south 9/5 Washington DN, 9/6 Blue Earth and LeSueur LF, **10/6** Olmsted JW.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER
10/16–20 Ely, St. Louis Co., SS, BT, 10/21 Wilkin KE *et al* (***The Loon*** 67:63).

Horned Lark
Reported from six counties north and 14 south. Late north 10/15 Aitkin WN and Clay CF, 10/22 Douglas DN, 10/25 Cook KMH.

Purple Martin
Late north 8/22 Clearwater AB, 8/23 Lake of the Woods RJ, 8/24 Kanabec CM. Late south 8/11 Winona CS, 8/28 Dakota TT, 8/31 Wright DN.

Tree Swallow
Late north 9/10 Pennington KSS, 9/11 Aitkin WN and Clay CF, 10/9 St. Louis MH. Late south 10/16 Winona CS, 10/21 Houston JD, 10/25 Lac Qui Parle FE.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Late north 8/6 Roseau PS, 8/21 Aitkin WN, 8/26 Pennington KSS. Late south 9/18 Hennepin TT, 9/22 Dakota KB, SC, 9/24 Houston JD.

Bank Swallow
Late north 8/12 St. Louis MH, 8/23

Wadena RJ, 9/4 Aitkin WN. Late south 8/16 Washington WL, 8/31 Winona CS, 9/7 Hennepin TBr.

Cliff Swallow
Late north 8/31 Carlton LW, 9/4 Aitkin WN, 9/10 Pennington KSS. Late south 9/16 Olmsted JW, 9/22 Dakota KB, SC, 9/26 Lac Qui Parle AB.

Barn Swallow
Late north 9/25 Clay CF, 10/8 Douglas DN, 10/9 Otter Tail DJ and St. Louis MH. Late south 10/8 Houston JD, FL, 10/9 Martin RH, 10/10 LeSueur RG.

Gray Jay
Reported from ten north counties.

Blue Jay
Reported from 20 north and 27 south counties.

Black-billed Magpie
Reported from Aitkin (peak of 12 on 9/11 WN), Becker, Beltrami, Itasca, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Red Lake, Roseau, and Wilkin counties.

American Crow
Reported from 18 north and 25 south counties.

Common Raven
Reported from 13 north counties. Three south reports: **10/9 Hennepin** SC, **10/14** Sherburne KB, Anoka (resident) KB, JH.

Black-capped Chickadee
Reported from 17 north and 26 south counties.

Boreal Chickadee
Reported from Aitkin, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and St. Louis counties.

Tufted Titmouse
All reports: Houston (1–3 daily) EMF, 8/11 Washington MM, 8/21 Olmsted JW, 10/24 Winona *fide* CS, 11/2 Dakota CS, 11/30 Winona CS.

Red-breasted Nuthatch
Reported from 15 north and ten south counties.

White-breasted Nuthatch
Reported from 17 north and 26 south counties.

Brown Creeper
Reported from 11 north and 17 south counties. Late north 10/30 Clay CF, 11/6 Itasca AB.

House Wren
Late north 9/29 St. Louis ME, 10/1 Clay CF, **10/22** (latest date north on record) Itasca JB/TS. Late south 10/10 Houston EMF, 10/13 Hennepin SC, 10/18 Lac Qui Parle WL.

Winter Wren
Early south 9/17 Anoka KB, 9/21 Hennepin SC. Late north 10/16 Clay CF, 10/18 St. Louis TBr, **10/25** Cook KMH. Late south 10/28 Winona CS, 10/31 Hennepin SC.

Sedge Wren
Late north 8/20 Otter Tail DN, 9/4 Aitkin WN, 10/16 Clay CF. Late south 9/3 Brown JS, 9/24 Freeborn RJ, 10/8 Hennepin TT.

Marsh Wren
Late north 10/9 Clay CF, 10/21 Wilkin CS, **10/28** Otter Tail CSc, **10/31** (latest date north on record) St. Louis JG. Late south 10/4 Anoka KB, 10/9 Nicollet LF, **11/5** (second latest date on record) Hennepin SC.

Golden-crowned Kinglet
Early south 9/17 Hennepin SC, TT, and Washington WL, 9/18 Winona AM. Late north 11/24 St. Louis SS, 11/25 Carlton LW. Late south 11/25 Anoka CF, 11/30 Brown JS.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Early south 9/3 Olmsted JW, 9/5 Washington DN and Winona CS. Late north 9/21 Carlton LW, 9/22 Becker BBe and Cook KMH. Late south 11/8 Dakota TT,

11/9 Rock ND.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Reported from five northern counties (two last year). Late north 8/21 Aitkin CMG and Becker BBe, 9/6 Kanabec CM, **11/6** (latest date on record) **Cook**, MH *et al.* Late south 9/18 Hennepin SC, 10/1 Washington TEB, **10/20–28** Winona CS, mob.

Eastern Bluebird
Late north 11/5 Aitkin WN and Lake MH, 11/10 Becker BK, **11/26** Cook SOL. Late south 11/2 Dakota DSm, 11/5 Martin BB, 11/13 Brown JS.

Mountain Bluebird
Two reports: 10/19 Otter Tail (female) SDM, **11/5** Faribault (pair) RG, RJ.

Townsend's Solitaire
All reports: 10/15–11/30 St. Louis (seven birds, including two on 11/8 FN) mob, 11/4 **Becker** (1) BBe, 11/24 Lake (1) AH.

Veery
Late north 8/25 Kanabec CM, 8/26 Clearwater AB, **10/18** (latest date north on record) Cook KMH. Late south 8/31 Brown JS, 9/14 Hennepin SC, 9/24 Winona CS.

Gray-cheeked Thrush
Early south 9/6 Ramsey TBr, 9/19 Houston EMF. Late north 9/27 Carlton LW, 10/15–**10/17** Cook mob. Late south 9/24 Brown JS and Carver DBM, 9/25 Hennepin SC.

Swainson's Thrush
Early south 8/20 Hennepin SC, 8/28 Brown JS. Late north 9/30 Cook KMH, 10/1 St. Louis PBu, 10/21 Aitkin CMG. Late south 10/1 Hennepin SC, 10/19 Winona CS.

Hermit Thrush
Early south 9/17 Hennepin RB, 9/24 Brown JS. Late north 9/22 Carlton LW, Itasca JB/TS and St. Louis JBe, 9/23 Becker BBe. Late south 10/28 Brown JS, 11/7 Dakota TT.

Wood Thrush
Late north 8/4 Kanabec CM, 9/6 Cook KMH, **9/16** Pennington KSS. Late south 8/26 Winona CS, 9/20 Bloomington, Hennepin Co., JP, 10/5 Minneapolis, Hennepin Co., JBe.

American Robin
Reported from 18 north and 24 south counties. Late north 11/29 St. Louis TW, 11/30 Aitkin CMG and Lake SW/MS. Peak 10/20 Lakewood Pumping Station, Duluth (19,740+) KE.

Varied Thrush
All reports: Little Canada, Ramsey Co., 10/26 DS, 10/31 Hennepin JBe, 11/5–15 Beltrami *fide* DJ (mid-November, Elizabeth Township, Otter Tail Co., *fide* SDM) 11/20–27 Columbia Heights, Anoka Co., DH, 11/24–30 Ham Lake, Anoka Co., CBl, 11/28 Dakota *fide* EC. Three more birds appeared in November and subsequently overwintered: Mora, Kanabec Co., *fide* CM, Emily Township, Crow Wing Co., *fide* JB, Clay *fide* BO.

Gray Catbird
Late north 9/26 Lake of the Woods KB, 9/28 St. Louis SS, 10/20 Cook KMH. Late south 10/26 Winona Cs, 10/27 Houston EMF, **11/8** Hennepin TT.

Northern Mockingbird
Only report: 10/14 St. Louis DE.

SAGE THRASHER
Reported **10/23–29** Richfield, Hennepin Co., TT, mob (6th state record, ***The Loon*** 66:206).

Brown Thrasher
Late north 8/28 Aitkin WN, 9/11 Koochiching GM, 10/22 Clay CF. late south 9/29 Hennepin TT, 10/23 Carver AB, **11/30** Winona CS.

American Pipit
Early north 9/17 Roseau PS and St. Louis TBr. Early south 9/16 Anoka KB, 9/19

Dakota TT. Late north 10/4 St. Louis PBu, 10/22 Wilkin RH. Late south 11/5 Freeborn RJ, Hennepin TT and Rock ND.

Bohemian Waxwing
Reported from nine north counties. Early north 10/5 St. Louis KE, 10/29 Lake MH, 10/31 Koochiching GM.

Cedar Waxwing
Reported from 12 north and 25 south counties. Late north 11/6 Clay CF, 11/10 Cook KMH, 11/30 Aitkin CMG.

Northern Shrike
Early north 10/8 Cook AH, 10/9 St. Louis mob, 10/16 Aitkin TT and Wilkin SDM. Early south 10/10 LeSueur RG, 10/13 Dakota KB, 10/15 Carver DBM.

Loggerhead Shrike
All reports: Lyon (no date) HK, 8/5 Rice TB, 8/5-14 Dakota (three young on 8/6 SK) mob, 8/20 Clay CF.

European Starling
Reported from 14 north and 25 south counties.

Solitary Vireo
Early south 8/20 Hennepin OJ, 8/27 Rice TB. Late north 9/25 Clay CF, 9/26 Cook KMH, 10/4 Carlton LW. Late south 10/13 Hennepin JBe, 10/28 Winona CS.

Yellow-throated Vireo
Late north 9/16 Carlton LW, 9/18 Beltrami DJ, 9/19 Kanabec CM. Late south 9/23 Anoka KB and Dakota RH, 9/24 Hennepin TT, 9/27 Houston EMF and Winona CS.

Warbling Vireo
Late north 8/20 Beltrami DJ, 8/21 Aitkin CMG, 8/28 Mille Lacs RJ. Late south 9/17 Anoka KB, 9/24 Hennepin SC, **9/28** Winona CS.

Philadelphia Vireo
Early south 8/21 Winona AM, 8/28 Hennepin RB, SC. Late north 9/20 Cook KMH, 9/21 Aitkin WN, **11/5** (latest date on record) Lake MH. Late south 9/23 Anoka KB and Hennepin SC, 9/28 Winona CS.

Red-eyed Vireo
Late north 9/19 Cook KMH, 9/25 Clay CF, 10/2 Becker DW. Late south 10/5 Brown JS, 10/15 Anoka SC, **10/29** Houston FL.

Blue-winged Warbler
One north report: 8/27 Crow Wing SK. Late south 9/2 Winona CS, **9/21** Houston EMF, **9/26** (latest date on record) Anoka JBe. "Lawrence's Warbler" 8/9 Anoka RH, 8/14 Hennepin (female) SC.

Golden-winged Warbler
Late north 9/4 Aitkin CMG, 9/5 Carlton LW, 9/6 Kanabec CM. Late south 9/14 Brown JS and Winona CS, 9/26 Anoka JBe, **9/27** Hennepin SC.

Tennessee Warbler
Early south 8/5 Hennepin JBe, SC, 8/11 Brown JS and Rice TB. Late north 9/25 Cook KMH and Pennington KSS, **11/5** Clay CF (latest date north on record). Late south 10/12 Winona AM, 10/16 Hennepin SC.

Orange-crowned Warbler
Early north **8/12** St. Louis MH, 8/27 Crow Wing SK. Early south 8/17 Fillmore RH, 8/21 Hennepin PBu. Late north 10/16 Clay CF, **10/22** Otter Tail KE, RH. Late south 10/22 Hennepin SC, TT, 11/1 Kandiyohi RF.

Nashville Warbler
Early south 8/5 Hennepin SC, 8/14 Washington WL. Late north 10/8 Clay CF, 10/9 Aitkin CMG, 10/20 Carlton LW. Late south 10/10 LeSueur RG and Ramsey TT, **11/3** (third latest date on record) Hennepin County RJ.

Northern Parula
Early south 8/6 Hennepin SC, 8/25 Redwood RJ. Late north 8/28 Aitkin WN, 9/3 Kanabec CM, 9/14 Cook KMH. Late south 9/30 Hennepin SC and Winona CS, 10/8 Houston RG, RJ.

Yellow Warbler
Late north 9/4 Aitkin WN, 9/11 Clay CF, **9/30** St. Louis ME. Late south 9/2 Dakota DSm, 9/13 Hennepin SC, 9/17 Winona AM.

Chestnut-sided Warbler
Early south 8/9 Anoka RH, 8/14 Brown JS. Late north 9/18 Aitkin WN, 9/25 Clay CF and Kanabec CM. Late south 9/25 Winona AM, CS, 9/27 Houston EMF.

Magnolia Warbler
Early south 8/15 Olmsted JB, 8/17 Rice RG. Late north 9/24 Kanabec CM, 9/25 Cook KMH, 9/28 Carlton LW. Late south 10/4 Winona CS, 10/5 Hennepin JBe and Mower RRK.

Cape May Warbler
Early south 8/20 Olmsted County JB, 8/26 Hennepin County SC. Late north 8/24 Roseau RJ, 9/26 Lake of the Woods KB, 10/17 Cook County PS. Late south 9/8 Winona CS, 9/24 Hennepin SC and Mower RG, RJ.

Black-throated Blue Warbler
Reported from 11 counties (3 last year). Early south 9/5 Anoka JBe, CF, 9/12 Winona CS. Late north 9/10 Clay CF, 9/24 Duluth CM, 9/27 Carlton LW. Late south 10/16–17 Hennepin SC, JBe, DW, 10/18 Ramsey JaW.

Yellow-rumped Warbler
Early south 8/21 Hennepin TT and Winona AM, 8/29 Anoka JBe. Late north 10/31 Carlton LW, 11/19 Cook AH, PS, 11/25 Duluth AH. Late south 11/6 Hennepin SC, 11/16 Scott DBM.

BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER
Photographed **10/29** Amador Township, Chisago County, LWa (fourth state record, ***The Loon*** 66:207).

Black-throated Green Warbler
Early south 8/20 Hennepin DZ, 8/26 Wright RJ. Late north 9/23 Cook KMH, 10/1 St. Louis MH. Late south 10/1 Winona CS, **10/16** Hennepin SC.

Blackburnian Warbler
Early south 8/13 Rice TB, 8/15 Hennepin SC, Mower RRK and Steele RG. Late north 9/5 Becker BBe, 9/14 St. Louis TW, 9/17 Kanabec CM. Late south 9/24 Hennepin SC, **10/14** Pipestone ND.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER
Photographed **10/8** Stillwater, Washington Co., JL (***The Loon*** 66:211).

Pine Warbler
Late north 9/15 Carlton LW, 9/23 St. Louis SW/MS, 9/30 Becker BK. Late south 9/17 Hennepin PBu, 9/22 Dakota DSm, 9/23 Anoka KB.

Palm Warbler
Early south 8/20 Murray ND, 8/26 Olmsted JW. Late north 10/13 St. Louis TW, 10/15 Clay CF and Pennington KSS, 10/18 Cook KMH. Late south 10/17 Brown JS and Hennepin DW, 10/18 Winona CS.

Bay-breasted Warbler
Early south 8/20 Winona CS, 8/21 Hennepin SC, Tt, and Olmsted JW. Late north 9/23 Aitkin WN and Carlton LW, **10/30** (latest date on record) Cook PE *et al.* Late south 9/28 Winona CS, 9/29 Hennepin SC.

Blackpoll Warbler
Early north 8/18 Becker BBe, 8/27 Crow Wing SK. Early south 8/15 Olmsted JB, 8/20 Brown JS. Late north 9/24 Clay CF and St. Louis MH, 9/25 Cook KMH. Late south 9/23 Anoka KB and Brown JS, 10/5 Hennepin TT.

Cerulean Warbler
8/5 Nicollet RJ, 8/26 Winona CS.

Black-and-white Warbler
Late north 9/24 Cook KMH, 9/25 Pennington KSS. Late south 10/13 Brown JS, 10/15 Hennepin JBe.

American Redstart
Late north 9/26 Cook SOL, 10/3 Carlton LW. Late south 10/11 Winona CS, 10/16 Hennepin SC.

Prothonotary Warbler
All reports: 8/5 Nicollet JS, 8/10 Goodhue BL, **9/5** Winona CS.

Ovenbird
Late north 9/25 Itasca AB, Kanabec CM. Late south 10/6 Brown JS, 10/7 Hennepin JBe, DN.

Northern Waterthrush
Early south 8/7 Hennepin SC, 8/15 Winona CS. Late north 8/20 St. Louis TW, 9/8 Cook KMH. Late south 10/4 Anoka KB, 10/10 Ramsey TT.

Louisiana Waterthrush
One report: **9/9** Winona CS.

Connecticut Warbler
Early south **8/15** Steele RG, 8/21 Winona CS. Late north 8/27 Crow Wing SK, 9/4 Carlton LW. Late south 9/13 Hennepin SC, 9/15 Brown JS, **11/2** (latest date on record) Hennepin AH.

Mourning Warbler
Early south 8/14 Hennepin SC, 8/17 Brown JS. Late north 9/11 Cook KMH, 9/16 Pennington KSS. Late south 9/23 Brown JS, **10/16** (second latest date on record) Hennepin SC, SWe.

Common Yellowthroat
Late north 9/26 Roseau KB, 9/27 Carlton LW. Late south 11/22 Dakota RG, **11/24** Hennepin SC, JBe.

Wilson's Warbler
Early south 8/14 Hennepin SC, 8/17 Brown JS. Late north 9/16 Kanabec CM, 9/25 Pennington KSS. Late south 9/17 Winona AM, 9/24 Hennepin SC, DZ.

Canada Warbler
Early south **8/11** Hennepin SC, 8/15 Steele RG. Late north 8/28 Carlton LW, 9/1 Becker BK. Late south 9/25 Goodhue SWe, 10/1 Hennepin SC.

Summer Tanager
Reported **10/24-26** (male) Lake SS, 8/19–28 (female) Olmsted mob.

Scarlet Tanager
Late north 9/8 Kanabec CM, 9/10 St. Louis SS. Late south 9/25 Hennepin SC, 9/26 Renville RG.

Northern Cardinal
Reported from four counties north and 19 counties south.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Late north 9/16 Kanabec CM and Pennington KSS, 9/26 Carlton LW. Late south 10/23 Dakota RH, **11/22** Hennepin County SC.

Indigo Bunting
Late north 8/21 Kanabec CM, 9/3 Aitkin WN. Late south 9/29 Houston EMF, 10/7 Ramsey RJ.

Dickcissel
All reports: 8/11 Brown JS, 8/12 Rice TB, 8/15 Olmsted JB, 9/20 **Duluth**, St. Louis Co. KE.

Rufous-sided Towhee
Late south 10/7 Winona CS, 10/8 Houston JD, RJ, FL.

American Tree Sparrow
Early north 10/2 Marshall KSS, 10/15 St. Louis MH. Early south 9/28 Winona CS, 9/30 Anoka JH.

Chipping Sparrow
Late north 10/28 St. Louis SS, **11/9** Aitkin CMG. Late south 11/7 Dakota TT, **11/11** Hennepin DBM.

Clay-colored Sparrow
Late north 10/22 Cook TBe, **11/8** (latest date on record) Lake KE. Late south 10/16 Hennepin SWe, **10/23** Hennepin DB.

Field Sparrow
Late south 10/14 Houston, 10/20 Brown JS, Winona CS.

Vesper Sparrow
Late north 10/9 Aitkin WN, 10/10 Carlton LW. Late south 10/23 Hennepin SWe, 10/25 Hennepin SC.

Lark Sparrow
One report: 8/8 Goodhue DSm.

Savannah Sparrow
Late north 10/15 Wilkin TBr, 10/19 Cook KMH. Late south 10/22 Hennepin OJ, 10/30 Dakota TT.

Grasshopper Sparrow
Late north **10/15** Wilkin TBr. Late south 8/5 Rice TB, 8/28 Brown JS.

LeConte's Sparrow
Late north 9/18 Aitkin WN and Kittson PS. Late south 9/17 Faribault RG, RJ, 10/7 Brown JS.

Fox Sparrow
Early north 9/24 Beltrami DJ and Itasca AB, 9/25 St. Louis TW. Early south 9/18 Hennepin SC, 10/27 Hennepin OJ and Scott RG. Late north 10/26 Carlton LW, 11/1 Pennington KSS. Late south 11/11 Hennepin SC, 11/13 Hennepin DZ.

Song Sparrow
Late north 11/5 Aitkin, 11/6 Cook MH.

Lincoln's Sparrow
Early south 9/5 Hennepin SC, 9/11 Dakota TT. Late north 10/9 Clearwater DJ, 10/14 Itasca AB. Late south 10/16 Hennepin SC, 10/20 Brown JS.

Swamp Sparrow
Late north 10/21 Aitkin CMG, 10/23 Duluth BL and Wilkin RH. Late south 11/20 Hennepin DZ, **11/25** Hennepin BL.

White-throated Sparrow
Early south **8/20** Washington DS, 9/6 Winona CS. Late north 11/20 St. Louis SW/MS, 11/30 Koochiching GM and St. Louis ME. Late south 11/29 Hennepin SC, 11/30 Houston EMF and Mower RRK.

White-crowned Sparrow
Early north 9/13 Cook KMH, 9/17 Becker BBe. Early south 9/16 Houston EMF, 9/18 Hennepin SC, TT. Late north 10/13 Aitkin CMG, 10/19 Cook KMH. Late south 10/29 Winona AM, **11/9** Washington TT.

Harris' Sparrow
Early north 9/17 St. Louis Co. TBr, 9/18 Kittson PS. Early south 9/16 Murray ND, 9/18 Hennepin KB. Late north 10/22 Otter Tail RH, 10/24 Kanabec CM. Late south 11/19 Murray ND, **11/30** Lac Qui Parle FE.

Dark-eyed Junco
Early south 9/16 Anoka JH, 9/17 Hennepin SC.

Lapland Longspur
Early north 9/11 Duluth PS, 9/17 Roseau PS. Early south 9/19 Dakota TT, 10/1 Chippewa RJ. Late north 10/23 Wilkin RH, 10/25 Cook KMH.

Smith's Longspur
Reported from Wilkin 10/23 mob.

Chestnut-collared Longspur
One report: 8/17 Clay FL.

Snow Bunting
Early north 10/11 Cook KMH, 10/15 Wilkin TBr. Early south 10/10 Hennepin SWe, 10/21 Benton RJ.

Bobolink
Late north 9/14 St. Louis TW, **10/17** St. Louis MH. Late south 8/21 Olmsted JB and Winona counties CS, 9/12 Hennepin TT.

Red-winged Blackbird
Late north 11/6 Cook MH, 11/19 Cook AH, PS.

Eastern Meadowlark
Late north 10/24 Cook KMH, 10/31 Cook SOL.

Western Meadowlark
Late north 10/20 Polk KSS, 11/2 Douglas DN.

Yellow-headed Blackbird
Late north 8/27 Wilkin CF, 8/31 Aitkin CMG and Otter Tail County CSc. Late south 8/7 Hennepin SC, 8/27 Meeker County RH.

Rusty Blackbird
Early north 9/17 Roseau PS, 9/18 St. Louis TEB. Early south 10/9 Hennepin TT, 10/14 Sherburne KB. Late north 10/29 Beltrami DJ, 11/6 Aitkin CMG and Cook MH. Late south 11/29 Murray ND, 11/30 Winona CS.

Brewer's Blackbird
Late north 10/10 KSS, 10/20 Otter Tail DS. Late south 10/20 Carver RG, 11/16 Lac Qui Parle WL.

Common Grackle
Late north 11/13 Aitkin CMG, 11/30 St. Louis ME.

Brown-headed Cowbird
Late north **11/4** Becker BBe. Late south 10/8 Rock ND, 10/29 Goodhue BL.

Orchard Oriole
8/15 Houston EMF, **9/2** Dakota DSm.

Northern Oriole
Late north **9/16** Pennington KSS, **11/23** Koochiching GM. Late south 9/18 Winona AM, **11/28** Ramsey WL.

Pine Grosbeak
Early north 10/4 Cook KMH, 10/24 Duluth RJ.

Purple Finch
Early south 9/7 Winona County CS, 9/10 Wabasha County JW.

House Finch
Reported from ten counties in the north and 14 counties in the south.

Red Crossbill
Reported from five counties in the north and one (Anoka) county in the south. Peak 10/12 Duluth, St. Louis County (205) mob.

White-winged Crossbill
Reported from five counties north and one (Anoka) south.

Common Redpoll
Early north 10/28 Pine DS, 11/9 Duluth KE.

Pine Siskin
Reported from 13 north and nine south counties.

American Goldfinch
Reported from 17 north and 24 south counties.

Evening Grosbeak
Reported from 13 counties north, plus Hennepin.

House Sparrow
Reported from 11 north and 19 south counties.

Observers

Walt Bachman	WB	Maureen Briggs	MBr
Parker Backstrom	PB	Dave Brown	DBr
Karl Bardon	KB	Paul Budde	PBu
Tony Barrett	TBa	Cole Burrell	CB
Joe Beck	JBe	Mike Butterfield	MB
Tom & Elizabeth Bell	TEB	Steve Carlson	SC
Betsy Beneke	BBe	Jeff Dankert	JD
Craig Blowers	CBl	Nelvina DeKam	ND
Janet Boe & Thom Soule	JB/TS	Ed Duerkson	ED
Tom Boevers	TB	Kim Eckert	KE
Brad Bolduan	BB	Fred Eckhardt	FE
Al Bolduc	AB	Dudley Edmondsen	DE
Don Bolduc	DB	Paul Egeland	PE
Jerry Bonkoski	JB	Dave Evans	DEv
Terry Brashear	TBr	Molly Evans	ME
Richard Brasket	RB	Bruce Fall	BF

Lawrence Filter	LF
Herbert & Jeanette Fisher	HJF
Tony Flicek	TF
Eugene & Marilynn Ford	EMF
Cole Foster	CF
Randy Frederickson	RF
Merrill Frydendall	MF
J.S. Futcher	JF
Ray Glassel	RG
Clare & Maurita Geertz	CMG
Janet Green	JG
Mike Hendrickson	MH
Jean Herron	JHe
Anthony Hertzel	AH
Ken & Molly Hoffman	KMH
Robert Holtz	RH
Harlan Hostager	HH
James Howitz	J H
Robert Janssen	RJ
Doug Jenness	DJe
Douglas Johnson	DJ
Oscar Johnson	OJ
Byron Kincade	B K
Mark Kjolhaug	MK
Ron & Rose Kneeskern	RRK
Scott Krych	SK
Henry Kyllingstad	HK
Fred Lesher	FL
Bill Litkey	BL
William Longley	WL
Sandy & Orvis Lunke	SOL
William Marengo	WM
Grace Marquat	GM
Dennis & Barbara Martin	DBM
Craig Menze	CM
A. Steven Midthune	AM
Steve & Diane Millard	SDM
David Neitzel	DN
Warren Nelson	WN
Frank Nicoletti	FN
Mark Ochs	MO
Conniw Osbeck	CO
Anne Marie Plunkett	AP
Kim Risen	KR
Orwin Rustad	OR
Carol Schmidt	CSc
Steven Schon	SS
Carol Schumacher	CS
Drew Smith	DSm
Dave Sovereign	DS
Jack Sprenger	JS
Mike Steffes	MS
Keith & Shelley Steva	KSS
Forest & Kirsten Strnad	FKS
Peder Svingen	PS
Bill Tefft	BT
Tom Tustison	TT
Dan Versaw	DV
Larry Waddell	LWa
Jesse Wallace	JW
John Wallner	JWa
Don Wanschura	DW
Larry Weber	LW
Jeff Weitzel	JWe
Steve Weston	SWe
Kyle & Kristi Wicklund	KKW
Terry Wiens	TW
Steve Wilson & Mary Shed	SW/MS
Dave Zumeta	DZ
many observers	mob

1994 M.O.U. County Big Day Report

Jerry Bonkoski

It took seven years for someone to find 160 species in one county. Five years after Mike Hendrickson and Kim Risen found 159 species in St. Louis County, Peder Svingen was able to find 160 species in Roseau County on May 21, 1994. This improved his previous record in the same county by 26 species. What will the next milestone be for a County Big Day in Minnesota?

The 1994 MOU County Big Day was the seventh year this count has been conducted. There were 14 teams that *sent in* reports for 12 different counties. There were five new counties added to the list of counties that have had a Big Day con-

ducted, bringing the total to 49 for the seven years. In addition to the five new counties, three counties established new records for number of species seen.

The counties added in 1994 were Lac Qui Parle, Swift, Chisago, Koochiching, and Waseca. There are still 38 counties that have not been added to the list at this time. Perhaps you would like to go to one of the remaining counties and try your luck at doing a Big Day and establish a mark to challenge others.

The team from Olmsted County had an extraordinary day when they added 22 species to the record high count. The count of 152 species in one day, moved Olmsted County into 4th place on the overall list of high counts. Other counties setting new records were Carver County at 139, adding one species to their previous high, and Douglas County which added 10 species to change their record to 92 species.

Three counties, Olmsted, Steele, and Cottonwood, have sent in results for each of the past seven years. These three counties are to be commended for their perseverance in conducting and reporting the results of their Big Day each year. In order to be added to the list, you must send in the results of your Big Day. This includes a summary of time spent and a checklist of the species that were seen during your Big Day.

Since I have moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Bob Janssen has agreed to become the MOU Big Day Coordinator. Please send the results of your Big Day to:

Robert B. Janssen
10521 S. Cedar Lake Rd #212
Minnetonka, MN 55305

Bob will compile the results of the 1995 MOU County Big Day. Please send your results to him by November 1, 1995.

It is easy to do a County Big Day. Form a team, choose a county, plan your day and go out and enjoy the birds. At the end of the day, tally up your results, summarize your day and send the results to Bob Janssen. The summary should include the date, county, team members, and number of species seen. You also need to include a checklist of species seen which allows the record keepers to record additional information about bird species found in the various counties.

Thank you to all who have participated in the first seven MOU County Big Days. I have enjoyed compiling the results and look forward to seeing the annual report each year. Please continue to support this effort in the State.

4151 W Hilltop Lane, Franklin, WI 53132.

The Current list of Counties with Big Day Results

County	1994 Count	1994 Date	Record Count	Record Date	Record Holding Team
Roseau	160	5/21/94	160	5/21/94	Peder Svingen
St. Louis			159	5/20/89	Mike Hendrickson & Kim Risen
Polk			156	5/19/90	Dave & Sharon Lambeth & Peder Svingen
Olmsted	152	5/13/94	152	5/13/94	Jerry Bonkoski, Bob Ekblad, Jerry Pruett, Chuck Krulas, & Jeff Stephenson
Aitkin			151	5/15/93	Warren Nelson
Otter Tail			144	5/15/91	Steve & Diane Millard
Lyon			142	5/14/88	Henry Kyllingstad & Paul Egeland
Yellow Medicine			141	5/08/93	Parker Backstrom, Karl Bardon, & Peder Svingen
Nicolett			139	5/15/93	Anthony & Paul Hertzel

County	1994 Count	Date	Record Count	Date	Record Holding Team
Carver	139	5/15/94	139	5/15/94	Bill Marengo, Denny Martin, & Mike Mulligan
Lake of the Woods			136	5/29/93	Peder Svingen
Steele	116	5/14/94	134	5/16/92	Ken & Amanda Vail, Gary Johnson, Nels Thompson, Leanne Alt, Terry Dorsey, & Darryl Hill
Le Seuer			131	5/20/92	Peder Svingen
Kandiyohi	121	5/17/94	123	5/15/93	Ron Erpelding & Randy Fredrickson
Lincoln			122	5/14/88	Ray Glassel, Bob Janssen, & John Schladweiler
Lac Qui Parle	121	5/11/94	121	5/11/94	Bill Marengo
Cottonwood	92	5/21/94	118	5/13/89	Henry Schmidt, Walter Harder, & Ed Duerksen
Marshall			114	5/18/91	Shelly Steva, Darlene Kelly, Randi Hodny, & Linda Welk
Ramsey			114	5/08/93	Robert Holtz & John Wallner
Beltrami			113	5/19/90	Doug Johnson & Tim Dawson
Swift	113	5/14/94	113	5/14/94	Ray Glassel & Bob Janssen
Wright			112	5/16/92	Mark Stensaas & John Hokema
Houston			111	5/11/93	Jerry Bonkoski, Tony Casucci, Bob Ekblad, Jerry Pruett, & Dave Squillace
Clearwater			107	5/29/93	Doug Johnson
Cook			104	6/04/91	Ken & Molly Hoffman
Carlton			104	5/21/88	Fran & Larry Weber
Freeborn			104	5/23/90	Anne Marie Plunkett
Lake			103	5/30/93	Anthony Hertzel & Ann Vogel
Chisago	102	5/14/94	102	5/14/94	Robert Holtz, John Wallner & Jim Bender
Rice			100	5/30/92	Rice County Bird Club
Dodge			100	5/14/91	Bob & Steve Ekblad and Jerry Bonkoski
Murray			99	5/15/92	Nelvina De Kam & Johanna Pals
Dakota			99	5/08/93	Drew Smith & Becky Roe-Smith
Fillmore			97	5/13/89	Filmore County Birders Club
Wahington			97	5/15/93	Robert Holtz and seven students
Hubbard			96	5/11/91	Ralph & Jean Leckner and Cory & Terry Olson
Kanabec			96	5/08/93	Craig Menze
Wadena			94	5/21/88	Jerome & Karol Gresser
Koochiching	92	8/07/94	92	8/07/94	Peder Svingen
Nobles			91	5/21/90	Nelvina De Kam
Clay			90	5/18/91	Terry & Cory Olson and Jean Leckner
Waseca	88	5/16/94	88	5/16/94	Ray Glassel
Rock			87	5/12/92	Nelvina De Kam
Douglas	82	5/15/94	82	5/15/94	Kris & Kyle Wicklund
Pipestone			77	5/14/88	Johanna Pals & Nelvina De Kam
Goodhue			76	5/15/92	Harlan Hostager
Sherburne			68	5/23/90	Barb Kull & Alice Schroeder
Isanti			50	5/26/93	Daphne & Meyers Peterson

BIRDING BY HINDSIGHT

A Second Look at... Shorebirds

Kim R. Eckert

Yes, we all know how hard it is to tell one hawk from another. Even worse, of course, are those dreaded immature gulls. But just as bad is a silent Empidonax flycatcher. Before you know it, those confusing fall warblers will be passing through. And who can tell all those sparrows apart? As mystifying as those birds are for many to identify, there is perhaps another group every bit as difficult, even for experienced birders. A group whose difficulty may not be as fully appreciated as those other birds until, for example, you find yourself trying to analyze and explain what you're looking at for the benefit of less experienced birders.

Shorebird identification alone is hard enough, but in Minnesota and other non-coastal areas, its difficulty is compounded, since birders here have comparatively few opportunities to see and study these migrants. We have to rely on temporarily flooded fields in spring, muddy shorelines left by receding lake levels in summer and fall, and the challenges presented by sewage ponds: rip-rapped shorelines where mud ought to be, fences lined with ambiguous no-trespassing signs, and that distinctive fragrance on a hot summer day. But now is the time to take another look at shorebirds — after all, ever since summer officially arrived in late June, so did the beginnings of fall migration for these birds.

Following are some thoughts on shorebird identification that might be worth keeping in mind as you head for your favorite sewage pond. Also keep in mind that this and all articles in this series are not intended to be complete identification analyses. The points discussed here are only intended to supplement, not replace, your field guides - to raise some questions you may not have thought of, rather than provide all the answers.

Black-bellied/American Golden Plovers

As the field guides adequately show, when these two species are in full alternate (breeding) plumage, they are not only beautiful to look at, but easy to distinguish. And when in flight in any plumage, they are also easily separable. The problem is that Black-bellied Plovers tend to look more brownish as juveniles, and also as adults when they begin to acquire or lose full alternate plumage. Thus, unless they fly, such Black-bellieds strongly resemble golden plovers.

Try to see the Black-bellied's thicker bill, the relative lack of contrast between the crown and supercilium (golden plovers tend to have a darker crown, which more clearly delineates the white supercilium) and if a juvenile, its whiter and more contrasting lower belly and undertail coverts (golden plovers are more uniform below). Unfortunately, unless there is direct comparison between the two, these differences are often difficult to determine.

Also listen for their different calls. The Black-bellied's is mellower, lower-pitched, and usually three-syllabled; the golden plover sounds screechier, higher-pitched, and one-syllabled or two-syllabled. If you're still unsure, wait until it flies, and don't be surprised if your initial guess as to its identity is belied by the field marks on the wings and tail.

Greater/Lesser Yellowlegs

Other than Killdeers, perhaps no other shorebirds are more familiar to Minnesota birders than those yellowlegs. But too many birders (myself included) struggle with which yellowlegs it is, about as often as we see one. When Greaters and Lessers are seen together, the three- to four-inch difference in their overall lengths is striking, but otherwise a yellowlegs' size is hard to tell without direct comparison with something else, like a Killdeer, which is essentially the same body length as a Lesser. Be careful, however — a Lesser Yellowlegs has longer legs than a Killdeer and may stand taller.

Try concentrating on the bills. A Greater's is longer (often appearing twice the length of the head), thicker, usually slightly upturned, and two-toned (gray at the base and blacker on the distal half); a Lesser's bill is shorter (not much more than the length of the head), thinner, straighter, and more uniformly black.

There is another difference on alternate-plumaged yellowlegs, with the Greater being more coarsely barred on the neck, breast, and flanks. Sometimes the time of year is useful, since Greaters tend to arrive earlier in spring and depart later in the fall than Lessers; also Lessers tend to linger later into May than Greaters during spring migration and arrive earlier in July during fall migration.

Many birders tell me they can separate calling yellowlegs by the number of syllables given (one or two for Lesser, three or more for Greater), but I have serious doubts that this is diagnostic, and I would welcome comments from readers on this point. More useful, I think, is the quality of the notes given. To my ear, Greaters sound higher-pitched and more strident than the lower-pitched, mellower Lessers.

Finally, for those with access to back issues of *Birding* magazine, I recommend the article on yellowlegs identification in the October 1982 issue (14:172–178).

Solitary/Spotted Sandpipers

Because of its overall shape and size, white eye ring, finely spotted under-parts and vaguely yellowish legs, the Solitary Sandpiper is often mistaken for a Lesser Yellowlegs. Note, however, the Solitary's bolder eye ring, greener legs, and if visible, its distinctive tail pattern.

Also listen for the Solitary's "peet weet" call note, which sounds a lot like a Spotted Sandpiper; those with a good ear for calls will notice that the Solitary's call is higher pitched than the Spotted's. And this brings up an overlooked identification problem in summer and fall when there are juvenile Spotted Sandpipers around. These have a bold white eye ring, pale-tipped and somewhat spotted feather edges on the upper-parts and dull greenish-yellow legs, and they might be mistaken for Solitarys. Both Spotteds and Solitarys even have similar bobbing body movements. Again, note the Solitary's diagnostic tail pattern in flight and, if the bird won't fly, note the bill color: dark on a Solitary, pale on a Spotted.

Hudsonian/Marbled Godwits

Godwit identification is similar to the situation with the plovers mentioned above; those in flight and those in full alternate plumage are easily separable, as shown in the field guides. But those godwits in spring that have yet to acquire alternate plumage and refuse to fly present a problem. It is amazing how nondescript they appear and how much the two species look alike, since the Hudsonian is more brownish than rusty below. Unless they call or fly, or unless the Hudsonian's slightly smaller size can be determined by direct comparison with something, the two are quite difficult to separate. And, as with all identification

problems presented here, readers' comments on this would be welcome.

One consolation is that godwit identification is not much of a problem during fall migration, since neither species is around here much. Marbleds have generally left the state after July, and Hudsonians are only casual in fall — and those that are here are in basic (winter) plumage, grayish overall, unlike the browner Marbleds.

Baird's/Buff-breasted Sandpipers

Many birders with limited shorebird experience are surprised during fall migration by how bright and buffy those juvenile Baird's Sandpipers can be, much buffier than shown in any field guide, and how much they can look like the more sought-after Buff-breasted. In addition, both species often occur in the same habitat — pastures, sod farms, and the like. But before you call that buffy sandpiper your lifer Buff-breasted, make sure the legs are yellow or even orangish (black on the Baird's), and that the buff coloration extends to the belly or even to the under-tail coverts; the buffiness on a Baird's extends no lower than the breast. Also note that a Buff-breasted's head and face bear a surprising resemblance to a Mourning Dove because of its "beady" black eye on a plain, unmarked face, and its relatively short bill.

Note as well that much has been made in most field guides regarding the Baird's Sandpiper's "scaly" back. While this is certainly present on a juvenile Baird's, it is a highly over-rated field mark, since many juvenile shorebirds (Buff-breasted included) have a similar scaly appearance caused by paler feather edges.

Pectoral Sandpiper/Ruff

While most birders are aware how widespread Killdeers and yellowlegs are in Minnesota, many are quite unaware how common the migrant Pectoral Sandpiper can be. It is not at all unusual to find more Pectorals than any other species during a day of shorebirding. Yet many novice shorebirders have trouble identifying it, probably because it just looks like a nondescript, medium-sized brown shorebird unless it turns to face you and reveals its diagnostic breast pattern. Even experienced birders are unprepared for how rusty the upper-parts can appear on a juvenile, and how much Pectorals vary in overall size; males can be an inch or so larger than females.

Despite its smaller size, black legs, and less heavily streaked breast, a Baird's Sandpiper has an overall resemblance to a Pectoral. A Sharp-tailed Sandpiper has even a closer resemblance, but this would be a first state record. Another Pectoral-like species, the Ruff, is also worthy of mention here. Though only listed as Casual on the official Minnesota list, the Ruff has been recorded almost annually in recent years. Juveniles especially look a lot like Pectorals due to their brownish overall plumage and brownish wash on the breast; note that this wash is paler and extends lower on the breast than a Pectoral, and it is not as sharply cut off from the belly.

A Ruff's overall stance may be more yellowlegs-like, but it usually exhibits a distinctive "pot-bellied" and "hump-backed" appearance. Its bill is more like a Pectoral, slightly decurved, relatively short, and pale at the base. Much has been made in the field guides regarding the Ruff's white ovals on the sides of the tail, but be sure to note that Pectorals and several other shorebirds also have white sides on the tail. However, these ovals on a Ruff are larger and nearly meet near the tip of the tail, suggesting a single U-shaped patch.

Stilt Sandpiper/dowitchers

Everyone knows it's hard enough to tell the two dowitchers apart, but the next time you see what looks like a dowitcher, before you get mired in the subtleties of dowitcher identification, it might be a good idea to first consider whether you're actually looking at a Stilt Sandpiper. Both Stilts and dowitchers have long bills and pale superciliums, and both characteristically probe the mud

with bills held vertically. When not in alternate plumage or when seen at a distance or in bad light, therefore, the two are easily confused. Like the plovers and godwits discussed earlier, they are readily separated in flight, but if not flying, try to see the bill shape (slightly decurved on a Stilt, straight on a dowitcher).

Also note that Stilt Sandpipers usually probe less rapidly than dowitchers, and they tend to walk around more than dowitchers as they feed; dowitchers typically stand in one place for longer periods.

Short-billed/Long-billed Dowitchers

In the previous article in this series (***The Loon*** 67:40–44), the differences in the migration timing of the two dowitchers and in the plumages of alternate-plumaged individuals were mentioned. A passing reference was also made to their calls - a lower-pitched, mellower, louder, Lesser Yellowlegs-like "tu-tu" or "tu-tu-tu" in Short-billed; a higher-pitched, thinner, softer, "keek" or "keek keek keek" in Long-billed.

During fall migration, both brightly colored juveniles and grayish basic-plumaged dowitchers are also encountered. If a juvenile (an individual with a clean-cut, fresh pattern of rusty feather edges on the upper-parts), simply examine its tertials (the longest visible feathers on the folded wing tips). If patterned with rusty and black markings, it's a Short-billed; the juvenile Long-billed's tertials are unmarked. Note, however, that this field mark does not work on alternate- or basic-plumaged dowitchers. Note as well that those grayish overall basic-plumaged individuals are probably not safely separated unless heard.

My best advice on dowitchers is to consult the second edition of the Geographic field guide (the first edition is not nearly as good on this), and remember that the Short-billed subspecies passing through Minnesota is *hendersoni.* Also for a more thorough, though sometimes confusing, treatment of dowitchers, see the article in the August-October 1983 issue of *Birding* (15:151–166).

If you've been able to make your way through this treatise, are you all set to handle the complexities of fall shorebird migration? Hardly. Astute readers should note that nothing here has been said about telling a Semipalmated Sandpiper from a Least or a Sanderling ... or a Western. Or, for that matter, how easy it is to confuse a Western with just about everything else, including Semis, Leasts, Sanderlings, White-rumpeds, and Dunlins. This article is certainly long enough already, and these highly confusing smaller shorebirds will have to wait for a future installment in this series. Promise. **8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.**

BOOK REVIEWS

HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF THE WORLD, VOL. 1: Ostrich to Ducks. J. del Hoyo, A. Elliott, and J. Sargatal, eds. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona, Spain, 1992, 696 pp. $165.

HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF THE

WORLD, VOL. 2: New World Vultures to Guineafowl. J. del Hoyo, A. Elliott, and J. Sargatal, eds. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona, Spain, 1994, 638 pp. $165. (These and future volumes available from specialty bookstores or from the publishers' U.S. office: American Lynx Edicions, 2305 Beach Blvd., Suite 102, Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250; tel. 904–246–3555).

There has long been a major gap in the ornithological literature: a multi-volume, illustrated, thorough treatment (at the species level and below) of the birds of the world. This series begins to fill this gap, and does so with remarkable effectiveness. It is foreseen that the complete work will constitute twelve volumes. This will total about 84 lbs. of richly illustrated, up-to-date text on acid-free paper, judging from the first two volumes. Given the timely appearance of the first two volumes, the involvement of multiple editors and many authors and artists, and, finally, the widespread interest that the first two volumes are receiving, we can depend on the appearance of the rest of the series.

The species are treated by family. The editors made the commendable choice of following a more traditional classification, rather than adopt one of the more recent revolutionary sequences. Thus, the families treated are those with which we are most familiar, with a few rather well supported changes.

Each family begins with a summary box and sections on systematics, morphological aspects, habitat, general habits, voice, food and feeding, breeding, movements, relationship with man, status and conservation, and a general bibliography. These pages are well illustrated with generally superb photographs of representative members of the family, usually in natural settings, and usually depicting some aspect of behavior or ecology. The photographs and their well-written captions are an excellent complement to the text.

The general family introductions are followed by individual species accounts. Each species is illustrated on color plates interspersed through the species accounts. It is thus possible to readily examine and compare the plumage, distribution, life history, etc. of all extant, closely related birds. Species accounts are grouped by genus. After the English common name and Latin scientific name, the French, German, Spanish, and alternative English common names appear. The species accounts consist of brief sections in reduced type giving taxonomy, subspecies and distribution (including a good map of distribution at the species level), descriptive notes, habitat, food and feeding, breeding, movements, status and conservation, and a bibliography. Extinct species are not included in the species accounts.

In general I find the text informative, readable, and indeed, engrossing. In the desire to save space, source material is not cited in the text, but is instead given in the general family bibliography and at the end of the species accounts, in running, alphabetical lists. These citations are both source material and recommended further reading. All full citations are given at the end of each volume in long reference sections (52 pp. in Vol. 1 and 50 pp. in Vol. 2, constituting many thousands of references). The reference sections seem very complete and up to date, and the reader thus has a ready introduction into the literature on families and single species by using both the general family bibliography and those given with every species. The status and conservation of each species is summarized based on the latest information. The authors' and editors' thoroughness extends to the inclusion of abbreviated citations of the original sources for scientific descriptions of the taxa treated (in a section preceding the general references).

The illustrations in these volumes are splendid. There are 382 color photographs and 50 plates reproduced in Vol. 1. In Vol. 2 there are 302 photographs and 60 plates. All of the species treated are illustrated (!), often more than once. Many of the subspecies are also figured. The plumages of juveniles and subadults

are not depicted in the plates, nor in the majority of the photographs. Non-breeding plumages (if present) are also lacking. Overall, this is not a detraction for a work of this type: it is not meant to be a field guide. In cases of remarkable sexual dichromatism, both sexes are depicted. The descriptive notes sections in each species account have been written by the artists.

In all aspects (text, plates, photographs, maps, presentation, and paper), these volumes are of the highest quality. There is no comparable work with which they can be compared. They fill a unique (and large) niche in the ornithological literature, and do so with style and excellence. This is a skillful combination of valuable reference work and richly illustrated bird book. While the per-volume price may seem rather high to the individual, the quality of the volumes justifies their cost. Further, if one considers this cost to be spread over the time between volumes, it becomes an affordable investment in what will likely be considered the ornithological publishing event of the decade. Anyone with an interest in birds should be familiar with this ongoing work; many will wish to own it. It is outstanding. **Kevin Winker, Conservation & Research Center, NZP, Smithsonian Institution, Front Royal, VA 22630.**

Return to Boot Lake Scientific and Natural Area
Anoka County, MN
Breeding Bird Census, 1994

William H. Longley

In 1989 and 1990, I conducted breeding bird censuses at Boot Lake Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) in eastern Anoka County, Minnesota (Longley, 1990 and 1991). This SNA is eight miles northwest of Forest Lake and adjacent to Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area.

In 1989, the area was recovering from a period of severe drought. On the other hand, 1994 was a year of recovery from a series of cold, wet summers. In fact, the summer of 1993 was the coldest on record. It was my impression that reproduction of insectivorous birds was strongly depressed in 1993; thus, my interest in returning to Boot Lake in 1994.

Methods

1. Spot-mapping was used, a technique first described by Williams (1936).

2. On 21 days from 16 March to 17 October, at intervals of seven to ten days, I walked over the Boot Lake SNA and recorded all birds seen or heard. Using a gridded map of the SNA, the location of each bird was noted and its status recorded as to male, female, pair, numbers in flocks, as well as activity such as breeding, nest building, etc.

Results

1. From 16 March to 17 October 1994, I recorded 111 species of birds on or over the Boot Lake SNA, compared to 121 in 1989 and 126 in 1990. Seven species not noted previously were listed in 1994. For the three years combined, the list stands at 158 species recorded in the area.

2. I recorded only 45 species as nesting/inferred nesting, compared to 55 in 1989 and 65 in 1990, indicating decreases of 18% from 1989, and 30.8% from 1990. All of the 1994 nesting species had nested there in the two previous census years. The three-year total was 67 species.

3. The number of nesting/inferred nesting pairs totaled 230–234, down from 310-321 in 1989 and 326–334 in 1990, decreases of 26.4% from 1989 and 30% from 1990.

4. Summer residents recorded on the area, but apparently not nesting, numbered 41. Of these, nine had not been recorded in 1989 or 1990, and 17 were recorded previously as nesting on the SNA. In addition, four species once nesting there were not present in 1994: Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, American Woodcock, and Chestnut-sided Warbler.

5. I recorded 25 transient/migrant species at the SNA, four of which had not been seen in 1989 or 1990.

6. Based upon a minimum of 230 pairs on the 232-acre area, the population density was as follows:

Year	1994	1989	1990
Pairs/100 acres	101	138	141
Pairs/100 hectares	249	342	348
Pairs/square mile	646	886	902

Discussion

The great decrease in bird numbers on the Boot Lake SNA from 1989–1990 to 1994 begs for a discussion of possible causes. The extremely cool summer of 1993 reduced insect populations and even reduced or prevented maturation of some seeds and fruits, and I sensed that some birds had difficulty in raising broods. I was also aware of unusual cold during recent winters in the southern United States, but I was not prepared for the startling decrease in birds at Boot Lake SNA.

Habitat changes during the four years since the last survey at Boot Lake include, of course, ecological succession at the 4,000 yards of forest/field edges since cultivation ended and perennial herbs began to succeed annuals. A thicket of White Pine saplings has advanced into Field No. V, especially along some of its southerly border where it extends as much as 40 yards. Field No. VI shows a lesser amount of young pine. The oldest of the pines appear to have seeded in 1987. Such vegetative changes would limit some species, such as Eastern Bluebirds, Northern Cardinals, Indigo Buntings, and Field and Chipping Sparrows.

Also, on private property adjacent to more than a mile of the northern boundary of the SNA, oak forest is being transformed into large homes with extensive lawns and scattered trees. There was evidence of children from these homes playing on SNA property, and even chopping down a few trees. I cannot point to any large loss of pairs on this boundary, but Eastern Wood-Pewees, Great Crested Flycatchers, and Red-eyed Vireos were decreased. A bit of remaining oak woodland with a Red-shouldered Hawk nest about 50 yards north of the boundary was slated for development soon after a carpenter pointed out the nest location.

Reduction of lowland brush along the outlet to Linwood Lake appears to be due to high water levels caused by excess precipitation and a beaver dam, which was removed, probably in 1993. A widespread growth of Swamp Loosestrife or Water-Willow appears to have prospered, but then was left high and dry. This growth-type seems singularly devoid of bird life. The beaver dam once provided some useful habitat, but proved to be annoying to some new Linwood Lake shore homeowners. This situation seems to have affected Green Herons, Alder Flycatchers, Veerys, and Common Yellowthroats.

The notable decrease of chickadees (18 pairs down to 11), Gray Catbirds (nine or ten pairs down to four), and Pine Warblers (eight or nine pairs down to four or five), and the complete lack of

Chestnut-sided Warblers might reflect the inclement weather. A slight increase of American Redstarts is interesting, as is the increased Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. There is a good possibility that they moved in from the old woodland destroyed by the house builders. That might also be the reason that the decrease of Ovenbirds, and some other species as well, has been less than what might be expected. Certainly, the general decline of forest songbirds in the eastern United States might be reflected in the Boot Lake population figures.

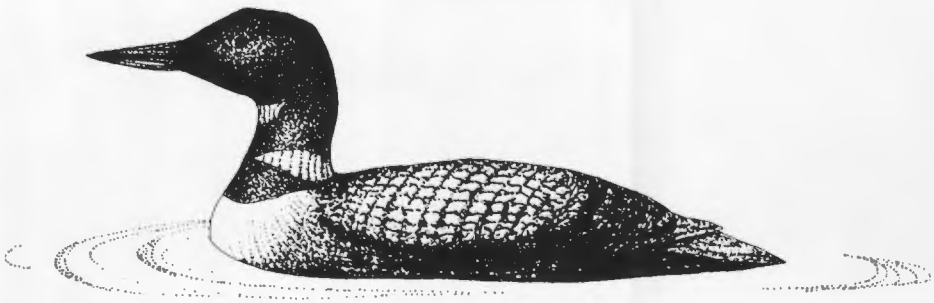
Literature Cited

Longley, W.H., 1990. Birds of the Boot Lake Scientific and Natural Area, Anoka County, MN (***The Loon*** 62:46–50).

Longley, W.H., 1991. Birds of the Boot Lake Scientific and Natural Area, Anoka County, MN (***The Loon*** 63:37–41).

Williams, A.B. The Composition and Dynamics of a Beech-Maple Climax Community. Ecol. Monogr., 6:318–408.

532 W. Broadway, Forest Lake, MN 55025.



NOTES OF INTEREST

BALD EAGLE PREDATION ON SNOWY OWL — On 11 October 1994 in Hallock Township, Kittson County, I was driving into our farmyard when a large brown spot in our black plowed field caught my eye. It was about 60 feet away and my immediate thought was a small bear. When I swung my head back for a second glance, I realized I was watching a pair of Bald Eagles. The one I initially saw was immature — all brown. The other was 12 feet from the first, mature, with striking regal white head. As I drove by, they flew about 16 feet, but never more than six feet above the ground. It was then that I noticed a Snowy Owl in the talons of the mature Bald Eagle. The wings of the Snowy Owl flapped in a struggle as the mature eagle took flight. The Snowy Owl was alive and fighting for its life. What an impressive sight it was, with those pure white wings outstretched beneath the huge, dark brown wings of the Bald Eagle. I proceeded into our garage, quickly grabbed my binoculars from the house and told my husband about the birds. We walked back toward the field. The eagles had now moved 100 feet from where I had first encountered them. When we neared them, they took flight just above the field with the owl still flapping its wings madly in the clutches of the Bald Eagle. They then disappeared into the woods of the Two Rivers that flows by our farm. **Marcia J. Johnson, RR 1, Box 101, Hallock, MN 56728.**

UNCOMMON FLOCK OF GEESE IN ST. LOUIS COUNTY — On Thursday, 16 March 1995, I had taken the morning off to do some photography in the Sax and Zim bog area. Just a few days earlier, there had been reports of Snow Geese and Greater White-fronted Geese in the Duluth Port Terminal area. After finishing the morning's photography, I decided to stop in and see if the geese were still around. As I drove the Interstate 535 bridge to the Port Terminal exit, a flock of geese flew over the high bridge and circled before landing in an open field below, which was dotted with small ponds from the melting snow. I still had photography in mind, so I barely used my binoculars to look the geese over, but instead got as close as I could and proceeded to take pictures. Two of the white Snow Geese looked a little small, but I thought, "You have them on film; identify them later." I had never seen Greater White-fronted Geese in St. Louis County before,

Ross', Snow (Blue) and Greater White-fronted Geese, 16 March 1995, Duluth, St. Louis County. Photo by Dudley Edmondson.

so I was pretty happy to have several of them in focus in my camera viewfinder. After I got the slides back from the photo lab, I discovered that I had been in the presence of a third species of goose — two Ross' Geese standing in the company of blue and white morph Snow Geese appeared in several of the slides. I called up several birders who had been in the area looking for the white-fronted geese and told them what I had found. I took the slides to Peder Svingen a few days later for confirmation. I had counted all the birds before I left the terminal area and did so again when I got the slides back. I tallied 25 blue and white morph Snow Geese, ten Greater White-fronted Geese, and two Ross' Geese. To photograph three species of geese in Duluth in one frame of film without including Canada Geese, I thought was very noteworthy. **Dudley Edmondson, 4302 Cooke St., Duluth, MN 55804.**

RED PHALAROPE IN ROSEAU COUNTY— On 8 October 1993 at 6:05 P.M. I discovered a phalarope swimming in a flooded portion of the Lost River WMA in Roseau County, Section 20, T163N R40W. I had thoroughly checked this area earlier in the day when a variety of late fall shorebirds were standing on top of ice, following an overnight freeze, so I am confident the phalarope arrived after open water became available. The brisk winds out of the N.W. made it brutally cold as I hiked out from the section road and it was impossible to extend the legs on my tripod, so my notes were made while kneeling in cold muck and sqinting into the wind for 45 minutes from 50–100 feet away. The bird was surface feeding but not "spinning" as it moved in a jerky side-to-side motion. Its dark eye patch and bill shape (relatively thick, short, and blunt) immediately suggested Red Phalarope and a fine, black and buff diamond pattern on the lower hindnape clinched the identification. Its back showed no white stripes (as in Red–necked Phalarope) and the silvery–gray scapulars looked freshly molted. The primaries and tertials were dark with tan or frosty gray edging and there was a darker gray (retained?) covert on the left wing. The underparts were white except for a faint, buffy wash on the lower throat. During several brief flights a strong white wing stripe was visible but the tail pattern was not clearly seen. The bird was not present the next morning, although the same group of shorebirds was once again standing on ice after an overnight freeze. This represents the eighth record of this currently Accidental species in Minnesota. **Peder Svingen, 2602 E. Fourth St., Duluth, MN 55812–1533.**

PROBABLE HYBRID MALE EURASIANXAMERICAN WIGEON IN DAKOTA COUNTY — On 8 April 1995, Susan Fall and I watched what was apparently a hybrid male wigeon about 10 km southeast of Hastings in Dakota Co. in the flooded farm fields north of Co. Rd. 68, just west of the Goodhue Co. line. Few ducks were present at this site in mid afternoon, but by early evening there were several hundred American Wigeons and hundreds of other ducks as well. Most of the wigeons, including this probable hybrid, were feeding on land as well as in the water. Using 40X scopes, we observed the bird from 5:30–6:45 P.M. at a distance of about 300m, and during that time we took notes and made a sketch. Although initially I thought it was a Eurasian Wigeon, further study confirmed that the bird differed from that species in at least five respects: 1) the head color was not chestnut or rufous but rather a bright orange-buff or golden-brown, similar to the head color of alternate-plumaged American Avocet as illustrated by Peterson (*A Field Guide to the Birds*, Houghton Mifflin, 1980), and quite different from the chestnut on the heads of nearby male Redheads and Green-winged Teal; 2) the orange-buff was restricted to the posterior of the head (rear crown, nape, auriculars), similar to the pattern of green in a male American Wigeon although somewhat more extensive; 3) the cheeks and throat were similar in color to the breast (pinkish brown), but grayer; 4) the crown was creamy white, identical to that of a male American Wigeon; 5) the sides were gray posteriorly but graded into the pinkish brown breast gradually, not abruptly. Although the bird flew several times, we were unable to note the axillar color. The dorsal wing pattern, black rump and white patch anterior to it, and bluish-gray bill were typical for males of both species, and the bird had the characteristic wigeon shape and posture. Field observations without substantiating photographs or specimen are unlikely to resolve hybrid parentage, but the observed characters indicate American X Eurasian Wigeon. This bird showed traits of both species: white crown and pinkish brown anterior side color of American; gray posterior side color of Eurasian; head pattern similar to American; orange-buff nape/auricular color of nei-

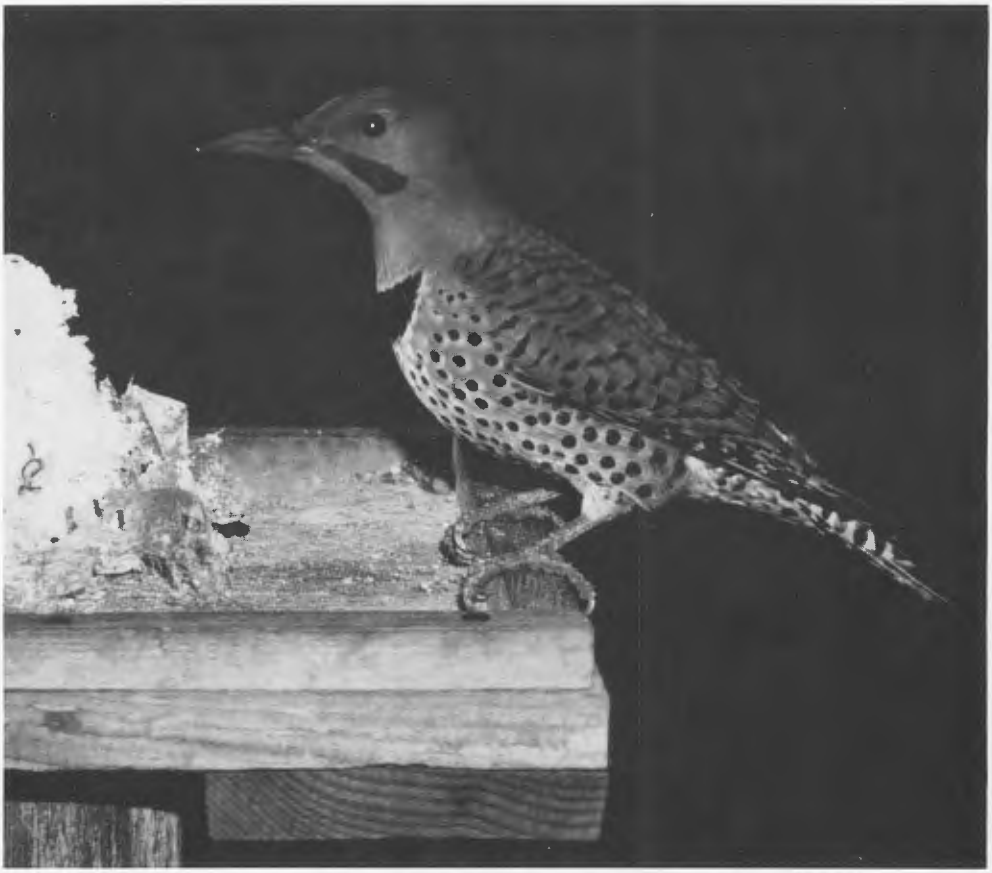
ther species but more similar to Eurasian. The peculiar head color is not typical of either, and superficially does not seem to be intermediate between the two since it represents a mixture of yellow and red-brown rather than green and red-brown. However, green coloration in many birds is a result of the combination of structural properties of the feather that differentially scatter blue light waves, and yellow carotenoid pigments deposited on top (F. Gill, *Ornithology*, 2nd ed., W. H. Freeman, 1995). Thus, hypothetically, genes responsible for yellow pigment and for red-brown pigment might both be present in a hybrid, and genes for structural blue absent. **Bruce A. Fall, 4300 – 29th Ave. S, Minneapolis, MN 55406.**

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE IN DULUTH — On 26 December 1994 at 2:05 P.M., I

spotted a small gull with a dainty, tern-like flight approaching Canal Park from the east. I immediately suspected a kittiwake and confirmed this when the bird circled, revealing the diagnostic blackish nuchal bar and "M" pattern across its wings. These details indicated first-winter plumage and ruled out immature Ross' and Little Gulls. It flew with rapid, smooth wing strokes, never soaring or gliding, remaining 50–100 feet above the surface of Lake Superior except once when it dipped to the surface but did not alight. It gradually approached to within 100 yards and disappeared to the southwest at 2:15 P.M. Through a Kowa TSN–4 with 40X eyepiece, I noted a black bill and eye, black legs and feet, and white underparts except for a black terminal band on its slightly notched tail and a thin, black leading and trailing edge to the outermost primaries from below. In retrospect, I probably mistook its black auricular spots for eyes, since I did not note these during the observation and even Kowa scopes have limitations! Nine of the state's seventeen kittiwake records are from the North Shore, including four from Duluth. This record is only the second from winter and is also the latest by more than three weeks. **Peder Svingen, 2602 E. Fourth St., Duluth, MN 55812–1533.**

RED-SHAFTED FLICKERS OBSERVED NEAR LYND, MINNESOTA — In early March

1995, my brother-in-law Bob Meyer reported that he had a pair of "Red-shafted" Northern Flickers coming to his suet feeder, located on wooded acreage on the east side of Camden State Park (NW 1/4 Sec. 33, T 111 N, R 42 W Lyon County). Bob first observed the female with distinctive pink linings under the wing and tail coming to the suet feeder in his yard in late December. A couple weeks later, a male with the distinctive red mustache markings also became a regular visitor at the suet feeder. On 1–2 April, I had a chance to visit the Meyers and check out the status of the unusual flickers. On both days, I observed a total of four flickers; two were male and female Northern Flickers with typical markings of the yellow-shafted variety. The female red-shafted variety seemed typical for that color phase. It showed a bright pink flash of color under the wings and tail each time it landed at the feeder. The male provided the most interesting surprise. It had the characteristic red mustache markings, but the primary feather shafts, wing under-linings, and coloring under the tail were yellow. The bird was a hybrid between the two color phases. This would be expected where the ranges of these types overlap. I succeeded in photographing the male with the red mustache markings, as well as the male and female of the yellow-shafted variety. The red-shafted female eluded my photography efforts. A photo of the hybrid male flicker accompanies this note. On both 1 and 2 April, the flickers first appeared between 6:40 A.M. and 7:00 A.M., and then visited the suet feeder several more times during the early morning. The frequency of their visits dropped off in late morning and throughout the after-



Hybrid Flicker, 2 April 1995, Lyon County. Photo by Carol Henderson.

noon. On one occasion, both the male and female red-shafted flickers shared the feeder platform simultaneously, and on another occasion both the male red-shafted and yellow-shafted flickers fed on opposite sides of the feeder. Since flickers often feed on the Meyers' lawn during the summer, Bob will be watching for the presence of the red-shafted flickers during the coming summer to see if they are permanent residents in the vicinity. **Carol Henderson, 640 – 119th Lane NE, Blaine, MN 55434.**

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL — On 27 March 1995, while scanning the large concentration of Herring Gulls and Ring-billed Gulls at Interstate Island, I observed a first-winter Greater Black-backed Gull harassing several Herring Gulls. The gull was noticeably larger than the nearby Herring Gulls. The overall color of the gull was sandy brown except the head, which was white. The mantle had a checkerboard pattern of slightly darker browns contrasting with the sandy browns. I noticed that the mantle of a first-winter Greater Black-backed Gull is much more uniform than that of an immature Herring Gull, a few of which were present for comparison. The bill was thicker and longer than a Herring

Gull's bill. The base of the upper and lower mandibles was lighter than the rest of the bill, which was black or brownish-black. The legs were a pinkish color. When the gull stood up next to a Herring Gull, the Greater Black-backed Gull was noticeably taller than its neighbor. I also noticed that the primaries were black. The eye was dark or blackish in color. The distance between the gulls and me was only about 400 feet; I was using a Kowa TSN–2 scope with a 30X eyepiece. It was an overcast day with some diffuse lighting. I have seen at least three or four first-winter Greater Black-backed Gulls before. This winter, there were sightings of a first-winter Greater Black-backed Gull on the Duluth Christmas Bird Count near Canal Park, and in January a mile north of Lakeview Castle Restaurant swimming offshore with a group of Herring Gulls. I believe this was the same bird involved in all three sightings. **Michael Hendrickson, 124 1/2 W. Orange St., Duluth, MN 55811.**

HARRIS' SPARROW IN WINTER – WINONA COUNTY — On 21 January 1995 at noon, I noticed a large sparrow on the ground in our backyard and immediately knew it was not one of our usual winter feeder birds. As it approached, I called Roger to come and help me identify it, and we jotted down the field marks as we watched — large speckles on white breast, distinct neckline, "barred" look to top of head, pink bill and feet, indistinct wing-bars, and streaked flanks. The bird was about 20 feet away by this time. "Reminds me of a Harris' Sparrow," I said and reached for the National Geographic field guide. We then concluded that it was an immature Harris' Sparrow. While we were quite familiar with the black head and throat of a breeding-plumaged Harris', we had not seen a Harris' in winter before. We checked *Birds in Minnesota*, R. Janssen, and found no mention of winter records for Winona County. We have seen it several times a week, coming

Harris' Sparrow, 2 February 1995, Dakota, Winona County. Photo by Gretchen Johnson.

to our feeder that has chipped sunflower seeds, and as of 22 February, it was still around. While "one swallow doth not a summer make," one sparrow made our winter much more interesting! **Gretchen and Roger Johnson, Route 1, Box 8M, Dakota, MN 55925.**

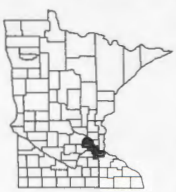
CATTLE EGRETS IN RAMSEY COUNTY — On 16 May 1995, as part of the final field test for my ornithology course, I took the class to three different sites. The first of those locations was the Upper Lake end of the Crosby Farm Park. The entrance of that end of the park is just off Shepherd Road near the Watergate Marina in St. Paul. After an identification hike around Upper Lake as we approached our van, I spotted two basically white birds on the grassy area which is between the two parking lots in the park. The birds appeared to be 18"–20" tall and were walking and feeding, presumably on insects, at a very leisurely pace. They were not disturbed by our presence and we were able to approach within 100 feet or less. They were not in full breeding plumage, but with a bit of rusty-orange plumage on their heads and backs (hardly noticeable on breasts), they were readily identified as Cattle Egrets. Three of the students had been with me in Arizona in early April, where we had seen Cattle Egrets; one of them quickly recognized the birds. We only observed them for about three minutes, as we were on a tight schedule. The next day, I took a Field Biology class to the area and the egrets were nowhere in sight. **Robert Holtz, 2997 N. Chatsworth, St. Paul, MN 55113.**

OCTOBER MIGRATION OF THAYER'S GULLS IN THE TWIN CITIES — In both 1993 and 1994, Thayer's Gulls were documented in the Twin Cities in early-October, several weeks earlier than the previously known early fall dates. The individuals seen in the Twin Cities in 1993 included a first-winter bird seen at Lake George, Anoka County as early as 8 October, and two first-winter birds there beginning 18 October. Adults were seen at Lake George on 21 October and at Lake Calhoun, Hennepin County on 23 October. In 1994, two first-winter Thayer's Gulls showed up at Lake George on the record early date of 5 October. One of these individuals was photographed. These two birds were seen again at Lake George by Steve Carlson and I on 10 October. Then, while checking the Herring Gulls which roost at Lake Calhoun, Steve and I documented at least three Thayer's Gulls on 11 October, and five on 12 October. These included one first-winter bird, at least three "typical" adults, and one adult with frosty gray wingtips which may have actually been an Iceland Gull. This latter individual was seen on 11, 12, and 14 October, but could never be confirmed as an Iceland. The gray color of the folded primaries (only slightly darker than the mantle), the much more extensive white areas in the folded wingtip, the consistently paler mantle, and the lack of dark head streaking all made this individual look noticeably paler overall than the adjacent Herring Gulls, but details of the overall size and structure were not entirely consistent with Iceland Gull, and the bird was left as a mystery. Still, the possibility of an Iceland Gull in Minnesota on 11 October seems remarkable. By comparison, the adult Thayer's Gulls could be picked out of the raft of Herring Gulls by their dark iris, similarly colored mantle, more extensive areas of white in the folded wingtip, and generally smaller bill, rounder crown, and more attenuated wingtips. These Thayer's Gull observations are particularly significant since there had only been two previous reports of this species in southern Minnesota in October: 20 October 1991 (***The Loon*** 64:90) and 25 October 1992 (***The Loon*** 65:73). Although Thayer's Gulls are often reported along the North Shore in the latter half of October, the earliest fall date for

northern MN is 15 October (Janssen, *Birds in Minnesota,* 1987). Since multiple individuals were seen in early to mid-October in two successive seasons, and since most observers do not focus their attention on gulls or expect Thayer's Gulls until November or even December, it is the opinion of this author that these early records of Thayer's Gulls have simply been overlooked in southern Minnesota. Can a September record for Thayer's Gull be far behind? **Karl Bardon, 1430 – 100th Avenue NW #212, Coon Rapids, MN 55433.**

PRAIRIE FALCON OVERWINTERS IN MINNEAPOLIS — Several times during winter 1994–95, I saw a large unidentified pale falcon on and near the University of Minnesota East Bank campus in Minneapolis. The first sighting was 1 Dec. 1994 when I briefly saw it flying near the grain elevators just east of campus. On 15 and 19 Feb. 1995 I saw what almost certainly was the same bird flying above and perched near the top of Moos Tower in the medical school complex on campus, on Washington Ave. about 1 km W of the elevators, and on 23 Feb. I again saw it flying near the grain elevators. Even without binoculars, I was able to note that the bird was large, had very dark underwing coverts that contrasted with the pale underside of the primaries and secondaries, and was pale grayish tan dorsally, whiter ventrally. These field marks suggested Prairie Falcon and I was able to confirm this identification on 25 February when Susan Fall and I located it perched on a grain storage bin on 25th Ave. SE, north of University Ave. and just east of campus. We watched it for about an hour with 40X scopes at a distance of 150m. The head pattern (two diffuse creamy white spots on the nape, white line over the eye, single large white marks below and behind eye, and slender dark brown mustache mark), plus the grayish tan base color of the upperparts, the relative length of the primaries (extending to within 3–5 cm of the tip of the tail), and the paler grayish tan tail with indistinct barring were conclusive field marks for this species. The specific pattern of feathers of the back and wing coverts (darker grayish brown, each with several internal buff or tan bars), the underparts (white, lightly to moderately spotted, darker concentration of spots on the flanks), plus the color of soft parts (yellowish brown orbital ring, yellow cere, yellow tarsi) indicated that the bird was an adult, according to Clark and Wheeler (*A Field Guide to Hawks of North America,* Houghton Mifflin, 1987). It appeared to lack leg bands and thus was likely a wild bird. This falcon probably frequented the extensive grain elevator and storage bin complexes from 23rd Ave. SE east to near Hwy 280, but it proved so difficult to relocate that I suspect it spent much of its time at undiscovered locations elsewhere. Despite repeated searching into mid-March, I was never able to find it after 25 February, even though it was occasionally reported by others. **Bruce A. Fall, 4300 – 29th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55406.**

LONG-EARED OWLS IN WINTER — The mild winter of 1994–95 apparently permitted unusual numbers of Long–eared Owls to remain in Minnesota. Seasonal reports totaled at least 45 individuals in 11 counties this winter. This species is a rare winter visitant in the state, primarily in the southest region, and the average number of reports per winter for the past ten years is only *three.* Most unusual were the 16 birds reported by Anthony Hertzel in Dakota County on 10 January 1995 and the eight birds roosting together in a Hennepin County willow tree on 27 December 1994, reported by David Neitzel. Reports of multiple birds roosting together in Minnesota are exceptionally rare; this phenomenon was first described by Ron Huber in February 1959 when ten individuals were



discovered in Scott County (***The Flicker*** 31:62). **Peder Svingen, 2602 E. Fourth St., Duluth, MN 55812–1533.**

SUMMER FUN IN KOOCHICHING COUNTY — For years, Kim Eckert has admonished observers (in his *A Birder's Guide to Minnesota*) to explore Koochiching County during the breeding season. On 9 June 1995, Anthony Hertzel and I recorded a respectable 120 species, primarily in the Big Falls and International Falls areas. Our list included many species more typical of winter: Spruce Grouse, Black-backed and Three-toed Woodpeckers, Boreal Chickadee, White-winged Crossbill and other finches were all found along the first three miles of the Twomley–Williams Road in Sections 21, 16, and 9 of T155N/R26W. To reach this area go west from Big Falls for about nine miles on County Road 30 and turn right. Great Gray Owls have been seen along this road in the past. On 11 June 1995, I returned to Koochiching County and found an additional 20 species that had not been recorded on our Big Day. Most unusual was the calling Boreal Owl in lowland conifer forest about two miles east of Ray. Calling Boreal Owls have been reported during summer on at least two previous occasions (Janssen, R. B., 1987, *Birds in Minnesota*, pp. 184–185). Birds calling into June are not as unexpected in northern Idaho (Dan Svingen, pers. com.) and Colorado (Hayward, G. D. and P. H. Hayward, 1993, Boreal Owl, in *The Birds of North America*, No. 63, Philadelphia: American Ornithologists' Union). Obviously, a bird calling into June in Minnesota is most likely an unmated male. My next stop was Tilsen Creek, a well–marked marsh along Highway 11 about eight miles east of International Falls; this produced American Bittern, unexpected Virginia Rails, Sedge and Marsh Wrens. Another vast marsh is east of here, near the intersection of Highway 11 and County Road 96; the habitat looks promising for an out-of-range Least Bittern or even a Sharp-tailed Sparrow. Next, the dawn chorus along Highway 217 in the vicinity of the Rat Root River was deafening with several Wood Thrush found on territory west of Moose Lake. An excellent coniferous bog is located along the first two miles of the Wisner Road in the Koochiching State Forest; turn east off Highway 71 near milepost 394. The usual flycatchers, Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadees, thrushes, vireos, and warblers including Palm and Connecticut are usually easy to find. White-winged Crossbills were also here and I found both Philadelphia Vireo and Golden-winged Warbler on territory near the turnoff from Highway 71. County Road 13 transects an interesting variety of habitat north of Big Falls; species found on 11 June included Wilson's Warbler (somewhere, there's probably a Rusty Blackbird!) and Indigo Bunting. Even after wandering through Pine Island State Forest on this and previous trips, there are many roads left for me to explore in this vast county — and I've got my eye on Myrtle Lake in the Lake Agassiz Peatlands of the Koochiching State Forest. **Peder Svingen, 2602 E. Fourth St., Duluth, MN 55812–1533.**

UNUSUAL CONCENTRATION OF BONAPARTE'S GULLS — In the thirty years I have been recording birds observed on Grey Cloud Island, never have I seen as many Bonaparte's Gulls as I did this spring (1995). Most years I do not see any Bonaparte's Gulls on Grey Cloud and when observed during spring or fall migration times, there have only been a few. This spring the first Bonaparte's Gulls were seen on 17 April 1995 flying above Grey Cloud Channel. Within a week the population had grown to approximately 1,000, and three days later the population was estimated to be at least 2,000 birds. The last of the Bonaparte's Gulls were seen on 9 May 1995. The gulls were present for three weeks,

building up in numbers for about one week and tapering down through the last week. Immature gulls made up less than 10% of the population.. Grey Cloud Island is located in the southwest corner of Washington County. The gulls were observed primarily on Mooers Lake and Grey Cloud Channel, which are both considered backwaters of the Mississippi River within Pool 2. Additional gulls may have been feeding on Baldwin Lake and Spring Lake, which are adjoining bodies of water, but they were not checked. The number of Bonaparte's Gulls present was possible to estimate because at times they would raft up in large numbers. The attraction for the gulls seemed to be the very large population of small (three to five inches long) Gizzard Shad present in the backwaters. Frequently large numbers of Gizzard Shad die off in the winter and are observed in the open water areas maintained by ground water (springs) flowing into the channel. The winter of 1994–95 did not have the typical die off, but soon after the ice left, schools of Gizzard Shad were seen swimming in the shallow water. Some of the fish were feebly swimming on their sides and coming to the surface. These were the individuals frequently selected for food and were preferred over those that had died and were floating at the surface. The Bonaparte's Gulls were not alone in harvesting the shad, for they were joined by large numbers of Ring-billed Gulls, a few Herring Gulls, Double-crested Cormorants, Red-breasted Mergansers, Great Blue Herons, Great Egrets and six American White Pelicans. Frequently the Ring-billed Gulls would steal food from the Bonaparte's Gulls by pursuing them till they dropped their prey and then the Ring-billed Gulls would swoop down and pick up the jettisoned morsel. The circumstances that led to the large accumulation of Bonaparte's Gulls provided a wonderful opportunity to observe this species and become familiar with its behavior. It will be interesting to see if Grey Cloud will become a more regular stop for this species during spring migration. **Tom Bell, Grey Cloud Island, 5868 Pioneer Road South, St. Paul Park, MN 55071.**

FIRST-YEAR ICELAND GULL NEAR RED WING, GOODHUE COUNTY — On 25 March 1995, I discovered a first-year Iceland Gull at Colville Park, about 2 km east of Red Wing, Goodhue Co. The bird was resting and feeding in a back bay of the Mississippi River in a flock of an estimated 5,000 gulls (about 95% Ring-billed Gulls, but initially including a few hundred Herring Gulls and at least two first-year Thayer's Gulls). This cooperative gull perched for extended periods on a dock only 55–70 m from my vantage point on shore, and it afforded excellent and extended views. Generally conspicuous and easy to find, it remained in this area until at least 2 April (eight days after its discovery) and a number of other observers were able to see it. On five separate days, I watched this gull for several hours total and took a series of photos. This large gull congregation probably was the result of the local abundance of small gizzard shad, which could be seen by the thousands near shore. Large numbers of gulls were feeding on these fish almost constantly every time I visited the site. I initially noticed this gull because of its uniformly pale creamy tan coloration. By direct comparison, it was slightly but distinctly smaller than Herring Gulls, and substantially larger than Ring-billed Gulls. Its crown profile was evenly rounded and dove-like, not angular or flattened like that of Herring Gulls. The bill, with a gently rounded culmen and only a slight bulge at the gonydeal angle, was noticeably shorter, slighter and more delicate than that of Herring Gulls. The distal half was dark charcoal, grading into somewhat paler gray (with brownish undertone) on the proximal half. The cutting edge of the mandibles was the blackest, extending from the tip toward the base. Legs were grayish pink and the eyes were blackish brown. The overall color of the underparts and head was creamy tan, a color resulting from rather fine grayish tan internal

markings on a base color of creamy white. The upperparts (scapulars, secondary coverts) were somewhat darker, but had the same general pattern of grayish tan markings on creamy white feathers, although the markings were coarser. The tertials also were creamy white, each with some irregular internal grayish tan markings. On the folded wing, the primary wing feathers appeared mostly creamy white, and were conspicuously the palest region of the bird. On closer inspection, some faint grayish tan internal markings were visible. Of the visible primaries on the folded wing, all but the outer showed a faint, smudged grayish tan line along the rachis, terminating in a small darker grayish brown subterminal spot. Photos of the spread wing show that the outer primaries (and to a lesser degree the inner ones) were creamy at the tip, with creamy edges continuing toward the base on both outer and inner webs. Centrally, each feather had a conspicuously darker finger extending down the rachis and on either side of it, ending subterminally. On the folded wing, the darker central region was obscured by the overlying primary so that only the creamy tips and edges were visible. On the perched bird, this resulted in a mostly white wing tip, which was not apparent when the wing was spread. Overall on the spread wing, the outer primaries appeared only slightly paler than the rest of the wing, while the secondaries appeared about the same color — i.e., there was no darker "secondary bar" typical of first-year Thayer's Gulls. Ventrally, primaries and secondaries were unmarked creamy white, paler than the creamy buff under wing coverts. In the field, the tail appeared more or less the same color as the rest of the upperparts, including rump and upper tail coverts. Photos of the widely spread tail revealed an indistinct tail band caused by the darker and more uniformly solidly colored grayish tan inner webs of the rectrices. In contrast, the outer webs of all rectrices were creamy white with distinct grayish tan internal barring, and were similar in color and pattern to the upper tail coverts and rump. This band, apparent in photos when the tail was spread, differed from that in a typical Thayer's Gull in which the rectrices are mostly uniformly colored (generally dark grayish brown) on both webs, noticeably darker than the upper tail coverts and lacking internal barring or marking except perhaps on the bases of the outer one or two feathers. According to Zimmer (*Birding* 23:254–268, 1991), most first-year Iceland Gulls show a moderate tail band, although generally it is paler than that of Thayer's Gull. In summary, the pale creamy primaries on the folded wing with small dark subapical spots, pale tertials with darker internal vermiculation, lack of a dark secondary bar, and the individually patterned rectrices are characters that help distinguish this bird from a first-year Thayer's Gull. Bill pattern and shape, and the size and proportions of this bird permit distinction from Glaucous Gull. **Bruce A. Fall, 4300 – 29th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55406.**

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL IN DULUTH — On 9 December 1994 at 2:15 P.M., I

spotted a Great Black-backed Gull in first-winter plumage while scouting for the Duluth CBC. It was perched on the breakwater at Canal Park, the same location where Dudley Edmondson and I found one the previous year! It was obviously larger than nearby Herring Gulls, with a larger bill that was thickest at the gonys and all black. Its pale pink legs were longer than the Herring Gull's. The head was whitish except for a dusky wash on the ear coverts. A checkered, dark brown (blackish) pattern on the wings, back, and tertials first drew my attention to this individual, even before it stood up. It then began preening, revealing almost entirely white upper tail coverts and a thick, black subterminal band on the upper surface of the tail. Its blackish primaries extended just beyond the tail tip. The underparts were mostly whitish except for gray chevrons or barring on the flanks. It was not seen in flight that day. Anthony Hertzel was able to relocate it the

next day but it was not reported again until the Duluth CBC (17 December1994) when it was seen by Dudley Edmondson, Dave Gilbertson, Anthony Hertzel and myself. **Peder Svingen, 2602 E. Fourth St., Duluth, MN 55812–1533.**

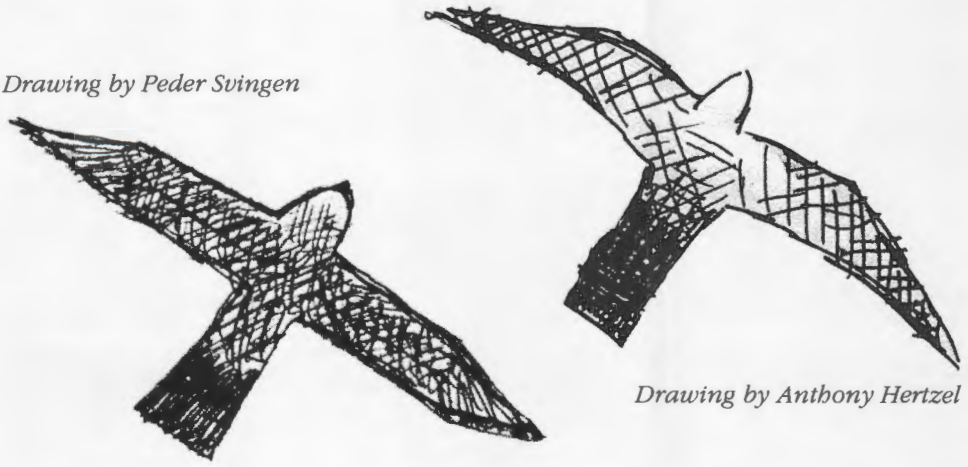
LATE TURKEY VULTURE RECORDS — On 26 November 1994, while counting hawks on Hawk Ridge, St. Louis County, I observered an immature Turkey Vulture. It was an overcast day with moderate (15–25 mph) southeasterly winds, a condition not conducive to a large movement of raptors. The bird was observed at eye level migrating close, 25 yards, along the east side of the ridge where it lazily went by. At this distance I could see that the head and beak were dusky in color, and I was even able to see the brown fuzzy down on the hind neck and crown. The bird was in fresh plumage, showing no sign of molt and even aged flight feathers, and appeared to be in good health. In fact, the bird had an extended crop meaning it had recently eaten. According to Janssen's, *Birds in Minnesota*, the latest date for northern Minnesota is the 9 November, so a new late record has been established for this species in northern Minnesota. Also noteworthy was another November sighting of an immature seen migrating past Hawk Ridge on the 22nd. This bird was seen in much the same fashion as the bird on the 26th, and corresponded with the largest flight day of the month when 1,011 raptors were counted. I would like to thank Kim Eckert for reviewing an earlier draft of this paper. **Frank J. Nicoletti, Braddock Bay Raptor Research, 432 Manitou Beach Road, Hilton N.Y. 14468.**

EYE TO EYE WITH A GYRFALCON — On Saturday, 4 December 1993, while birding around the harbor in Grand Marais, Cook County, we observed an immature gray morph Gyrfalcon perched on top of a dead 15-foot spruce tree near the beginning of the breakwall (behind the Coast Guard Station). We observed the bird for about 15 minutes through a spotting scope with a 22X eyepiece at a distance of about 50–75 yards. While observing the bird, it flew off the perch in a downward direction and out of sight. We decided to walk out on the breakwall and try and see where the bird flew. As we approached the tree it was last seen perched on, we flushed the Gyrfalcon from off the bedrock lining the breakwall about 50 feet in front of us. We observed a bunch of small feathers scatter into the air as the bird took off, and instead of flying off the bird began to circle around us at about eye level and below and on several occasions flared off above us. The bird flew around us following the perimeter of the jetty, and at times it was as close as thirty feet and we could clearly look into each other's eyes. At one point the bird landed back in the original tree and we observed it, and it observed us, at a distance of about 25 feet, we could see small feathers and blood around the beak. Then the bird flew off the perch and landed farther down the breakwall out of sight. We walked over to the spot we originally flushed the bird from and found a dead female or immature Common Goldeneye with the head and neck area plucked and partially eaten. The goldeneye was down along the edge of a few rocks where it was hidden from view from most directions. At this time we came into view of the Gyr again and it lifted off and flew towards us circling continuously as it had done previously. Interestingly enough, the bird did not make any vocalizations during the time we observed it. We backed off from the cached food and the bird stopped circling and landed on the rocks down the breakwall. We moved off so not to disturb the bird again and notified some local birders. This all occurred between 8:30 and 9:30 A.M.. On our return at 2:00 P.M. we met up with a local birder, Harvey Sobjiak,

and we didn't observe the Gyrfalcon anywhere in the harbor. We decided to walk out and see if it had finished eating the duck. As we approached the spruce tree where it originally perched, the Gyrfalcon flushed from the rocks a short distance from the remains of the duck and flew off across the harbor and out of sight. The duck had been moved to a more exposed location and was laying on its back with most of the meat eaten from around the breast exposing the breast bone. **Frank J. Nicoletti, Braddock Bay Raptor Research, 432 Manitou Beach Rd., Hillton, NY 14468, Tim Dawson, 5993 Arnold Rd., Duluth MN 55803.**

ADULT MISSISSIPPI KITE IN ROSEAU COUNTY — On 6 August 1994, Peder Svingen and I were birding Roseau County, and had just entered the town of Roseau. I was birding from the passenger side of the car while Peder drove along the eastern bank of the Roseau River. Glancing upward, I noticed a medium-sized bird approaching fairly low from behind us. Though approximately the same size as the many Franklin's Gulls which were in the area, it had a flight profile and manner unlike any gull. It gave me the distinct impression of a raptor, and I concluded immediately that it was a kite. Peder's notes record that at this moment I simply yelled over to him "Out of the car!" Fortunately for both

Drawing by Peder Svingen



Drawing by Anthony Hertzel

of us, he stopped the car first, and we jumped out in time to watch as the bird soared directly over our heads. (My notes here show Peder yelling "That looks like a kite!") We both had plenty of time to independently identify this bird as an adult Mississippi Kite as it followed the river, soon drifting over the tree tops and out of view. Though our total viewing time was probably no more than 20 seconds, the bird's approach to within 50 feet above us made what may have been a difficult identification much easier. Viewing conditions were poor, due to having to look directly up into cloudy but bright midday skies. The bird had a very dark, squared off tail. Its long, pointed wings were held in a slight dihedral, and were especially dark at the outer third. The bird never flapped it wings, but soared easily, though giving us both the appearance of a purposeful flight. We did not discuss this sighting until after each of had taken down notes and made a few drawings. Though we spent quite a bit of time searching the river and surrounding areas, we could not relocate the bird. **Anthony Hertzel, 8461 Pleasant View Dr., Mounds View, MN 55112.**

In This Issue

Purpose of the M.O.U.

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.

To carry out these aims, we: publish a magazine, ***The Loon***, and a newsletter, *Minnesota Birding;* conduct field trips; encourage and sponsor the preservation of natural areas; and hold seminars where research reports, unusual observations and conservation discussions are presented. We are supported by dues from members, affiliated clubs and special gifts. The M.O.U. wishes to point out that any or all phases of the M.O.U. program could be expanded significantly with gifts, memorials or bequests willed to the organization.

Suggestions to Authors

The editors of ***The Loon*** welcome submissions of articles, "Notes of Interest" and color or black & white photographs. Submissions should be typed, double-spaced and single-sided. Notes of Interest should be less than two pages. Photographs should be 5"x7". Whenever possible, please include a copy of your submission on any 3 ½ inch computer disk.

Club information and other announcements of general interest should be sent to the Newsletter editors. 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.

printed on recycled paper

The Loon

FALL 1995
VOLUME 67 – NUMBER 3

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 Street S.E., University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455–0104; e-mail mou@biosci.cbs.umn.edu. Anyone interested may join. All members receive our two publications: ***The Loon*** and *Minnesota Birding.*

ISSN 0024–645X

Immature *Plegadis* Ibises at Thielke Lake

Notes on Identification

Bruce A. Fall

On 23 July 1994, Anthony Hertzel discovered two dark (*Plegadis*) ibises at Thielke Lake, Big Stone County. He observed them at close range (less than 25 m) for over 1.5 hr; his detailed description of these birds is as follows:

"At approximately 10:30 A.M. on Saturday, 23 July 1994, I observed two ibises slowly circling low over the road at the north eastern side of Thielke Lake in Big Stone County. This location is .5 miles north of County Road 62 along County Road 65. The birds settled down on the east side of the road near the edge of a small pool containing several Franklin's Gulls. During the course of my observations, the two ibises would feed, stand or preen at this or another nearby pool. White-faced Ibis is Casual in Minnesota and Glossy Ibis is Accidental, so it was immediately obvious that whether these birds were Glossys or White-faced, they were certainly something to be documented.

These birds were very similar in overall appearance, and appeared to be the same age, suggestive of sub-adult birds of either this or the previous year. Though very similar, they also had a few subtle differences. Both birds shared the following characteristics.

General shape: Large, ungainly wading birds with long necks, bills and legs. They often stood erect and alert, carefully noting their surroundings. In flight the head and neck were held outstretched.

Feathers and color: Head, neck, breast, belly and under tail were medium brown, similar to the color of wet clay. In direct sunlight the color tended to give off a slight reddish cast. Also in good light I could see faint streaking of a lighter brown around the head and extending vertically down the neck on all sides. The wings, back and tail were a glossy, metallic or iridescent green, lighter and brighter in the primaries. The contour feathers of the head and neck swept backward and down, spreading away evenly from the eye and bill. There was much form and depth to the neck. It was not simply a long, feathered tube connecting the head to the body, but had ripples and creases and muscles, especially near the shoulders.

Bare parts: The long, blunt bill was widest near the face, deeply grooved and looked somewhat twisted. Its arcing, downward curve was very constant, though at about the 2/3 mark it bent slightly sharper before returning to its former plan of gradual bending. It was bluish at the inner half, blending into a very dull pinkish-brown at the outer half. The eyes were dark brown. A large, triangular patch of bare facial skin extended from the eye outward to meet the bill. This skin was colored a dark slate gray, perhaps a shade or two darker than the darkest part of the bill. Nowhere on or around the face did I find the slightest hint

of red, though I spent a lot of time looking.

There was an additional line of long, thin skin — lighter in color — overlaying the slate gray facial skin which extended from near the top of the upper mandible back to the eye. It was narrower toward the bill. This line of skin stopped forward of the eye, neither reaching it nor encircling it. It had enough of a distinctive, slightly bulbous shape to it that I was able to photograph it clearly, appearing as a highlighted region just in front of the eye.

There were two subtle, very thin, whitish lines defining the border between the brown cheek feathers and the bare facial skin. I could not tell if these were areas of light skin or if they were actually white feathers. The first and most apparent location was as an S-curved line extending downward from the eye to the lower mandible. The second location could barely be seen as extending from the eye to the upper mandible, and, in fact, was absent on one of the birds. Neither line passed to the back of the eye, and both terminated cleanly and directly in front of the eye. The shape of the lower whitish border was distinctive and consistent. Beginning at the eye, it widened slightly as it descended in a generally diagonal direction, though arcing upward and inward while still following the shape of the bare facial skin. At the midpoint, it narrowed substantially, curved down and then repeated the pattern, widening and arcing slightly upward and inward. Finally, it narrowed again and arced down, terminating near the edge of the forwardmost chin feathers. The legs were generally dark gray or bluish with thick intertarsals ("knees") and long, widely spread toes. The legs were at their narrowest halfway between the joints. Brown feathers extended down from the body and covered the legs for a short distance.

Differences between the two birds. While very similar, each bird had characteristics the other either lacked or expressed differently. Bird A showed four horizontal stripes of nearly white feathers down the front of his neck. Spaced evenly, they began well below the chin and ended at about the middle of the bird's neck. Bird B had no such markings. Bird A had some, but very little, white bordering on the lower edge of the side of his face, (as described previously), and none above. Bird B had more of this white edging, especially along the lower portion of his face, while the line above was barely visible. Bird A had some faint reddish coloring in his legs near the intertarsal joints, and the lower part of his leg was very blue. Bird B had legs with no red, and which were generally the same color overall and, though also dark gray, appeared somewhat greener. Also, bird B's legs were slightly darker on the lower half.

Feeding and behavior. Both birds probed the edges of the two small ponds where I found them, feeding for grubs and earthworms with their bills. Often they would submerge their bills in the water up to their eyes, and occasionally beyond."

Later that same day, several other observers relocated the birds and two of these observers, Kim Eckert and Peder Svingen, submitted additional field notes written during similarly close study, so there exists ample documentation, both photographic and written, of plumage and soft part color. The birds clearly were not adults in definitive alternate (=breeding) plumage, which is characterized by metallic maroon/chestnut head, neck and body. Identification to species (White-faced Ibis, *P. chihi*, and Glossy Ibis, *P. falcinellus*) is straightforward only if the birds are in definitive alternate plumage, generally from late winter or

early spring through late summer. At this time, White-faced exhibits a red iris, reddish facial skin bordered by a band of white feathers, mostly reddish legs and red tinge to bill, while Glossy has a dark brown eye, bluish gray facial skin edged with pale blue skin, dark bill and dark legs except for reddish at the intertarsal joint (Kaufman, 1990; Pratt 1976). Birds not in definitive alternate plumage (i.e., juveniles, subadults and adults in basic plumage) present identification problems, requiring excellent viewing conditions and even then identification often is not possible. In fact, birds in juvenal plumage are not identifiable to species (Kaufman 1990), and those in first basic may not be either although apparently the red eye of White-faced Ibis is acquired during the first winter (Ryder and Manry 1994; but see Pratt 1976). Identification of these birds, if possible, would require that their age/plumage be determined (i.e., juveniles, subadults or adults in basic plumage).

Molts and plumages: Molt sequences and resulting plumages are described by Oberholser (1974) for both species, Palmer (1962) who treats the two taxa as subspecies of Glossy Ibis, Ryder and Manry (1994) for White-faced Ibis, and Cramp and Simmons (1977) for Glossy Ibis in Europe (which is the same subspecies, *P. f. falcinellus*, that occurs in North America). Natal plumage of newly hatched individuals is completely replaced while still in the nest by juvenal plumage, which is worn for the remainder of the nestling stage and after fledging. Beginning in late summer, juveniles undergo a partial molt into the first basic (or first winter) plumage, which (in European Glossy Ibis, at least) is completed by October. According to Palmer (1962), this first prebasic molt begins when the young "have not been flying for more than a few weeks . . ." This molt involves replacement of feathers of the head and neck (where the molt begins), and eventually also includes scapulars, chest, back, rump, underparts and mantle and some of the inner lesser and median coverts. Starting in late winter and continuing to spring, a partial prealternate molt results in the first alternate (or first "breeding") plumage, although the birds do not breed at that age (Cramp and Simmons 1977). The extent of this molt apparently is variable and not well described; it includes feathers of the head, neck and body but some basic I feathers of these regions are not molted. In late summer through fall, a complete prebasic molt (involving all feathers of the body, including flight feathers and tail) results in the definitive basic plumage, worn from fall through late winter. In late winter and extending into spring, a partial prealternate molt results in the definitive alternate plumage. Definitive basic plumage is thus acquired in a bird's second autumn, and definitive alternate plumage in its second spring. By late July, these two ibises must have been either in juvenal plumage (possibly in early stages of prebasic I molt), or in first alternate plumage (possibly in early stages of prebasic II molt), since they were not in definitive alternate plumage. If they were in juvenal plumage, identification to species probably is not possible. If in alternate I plumage, identification may be possible based on soft part coloration and other features. Thus it is critical to determine the age of these birds before entertaining the possibility of specific identification.

Specimens: There are six White-faced Ibis specimens in the Bell Museum, but none of Glossy Ibis. These include three adults (two males in alternate plumage and one, sex not given but probably male, molting from alternate to basic) and three immatures, sex unknown, in basic I plumage. One adult and all three immatures were collected in Minnesota, all in the 1890s at Heron Lake, Jackson Co. The immatures were collected in November 1893 (one on 18 Nov. but exact date was not listed for the other two). The Minnesota adult was collected on 21 June 1895, from perhaps four pairs nesting at Heron Lake that year. The other two adults were collected in Mexico (3

August 1957; molting from alternate into basic plumage), and California (25 May 1889, full alternate plumage).

Plumage and soft part descriptions: Hertzel, Eckert and Svingen agree that the eyes were dark brown, lacking any hint of red, and the legs were dark gray or blue gray without conspicuous reddish, although Hertzel noted a "faint reddish coloring" near the intertarsal joints of one bird. The facial skin was slate gray, also without any hint of red. Hertzel described two subtle, very thin whitish lines defining the border between the facial feathering and the bare facial skin (but not extending behind the eye); he could not determine if these were feathers or skin, however. Eckert looked for but was unable to detect these paler lines; he determined that what at first looked like a paler border along the facial skin below the eye was the edge of the skin where it met the feathering. Svingen's field notes included: "unclear if border of upper facial skin with the feathering is truly edged pale — may be effect of light conditions, but definitely does not widen at midpoint." It seems clear that there was no pronounced pale blue border to the facial skin widening between eye and bill as is true for breeding season adult Glossy Ibis (Kaufman 1990), although a thin pale border may have been present on the lower edge of the facial skin on at least one bird.

All three observers agree that the feathering of the wings, coverts, scapulars and back was metallic or iridescent greenish. None mentioned any bluish or purplish undertones, and Eckert specifically stated that those hues were absent; photos seem to confirm this. Svingen noted the complete lack of maroon or chestnut feathers anywhere, including the scapulars. The head neck and underparts were described as flat brown or grayish brown (Eckert), dark brown (Svingen), and medium brown, which in direct sunlight "tended to give off a slight reddish cast" (Hertzel). Hertzel later further clarified this to emphasize that "cast" meant tendency, or warm brown hue, not actual reddish feathers. Hertzel and Svingen reported faint lighter brown or whitish streaking on the head of one of the birds, which extended down the neck, but this was not noted by Eckert ("any pale streaking on neck/body was absent or indistinct or not noticed"). Hertzel noted that one bird, but not the other, had whitish horizontal stripes down the front of its neck; Svingen described whitish feathers on its mid to lower neck.

Juvenal plumage: The observers' plumage descriptions seem entirely consistent with published descriptions of juvenal plumage of both species. For example, Palmer (1962) describes that plumage as follows: head and neck dull grayish brown with obscure lighter streaking (usually on the head only), and white patch on throat; upperparts and wing coverts dull greenish (dull metallic dark greenish olive; Ryder and Manry 1994); underparts lighter than upperparts, brownish with little or no gloss. Cramp and Simmons (1977) add that there is a variable amount of white on the crown, throat and foreneck, and usually some white bars or spots on the throat and foreneck, extensive in some and absent in others; juveniles lack strong green and purple gloss like adults, lack chestnut on the forewing, and the underparts and thighs lack a rufous tinge. Basic plumage is characterized by distinct pale streaking on the feathers of the head and neck, resulting from pale whitish edges surrounding the dark blackish brown central portion of each feather (Cramp and Simmons 1977; also evident on Bell Museum specimens). Although this streaking in basic I is somewhat paler and less distinct than that in definitive basic, the description of these birds indicates they were not in basic plumage (although they might have been in early stages of prebasic molt).

First alternate plumage: Alternate I plumage and the prealternate molt resulting in that plumage is best described by Cramp and Simmons (1977) for Glossy Ibis. This plumage is variable; the feathers of the head and neck have chestnut

tips, brown bases and variable off-white margins, which give the head and neck a streaked or mottled rufous appearance. In some, alternate I is mainly like definitive basic. The feathers of the mantle and scapulars are variably tinged chestnut, and the underparts are chestnut like definitive alternate, but usually some brown feather bases are visible. The wing is more strongly glossed with purple and green than in juvenal plumage, but less than in definitive alternate. The forewing usually lacks chestnut. For White-faced Ibis, Ryder and Manry (1994) state that alternate I plumage is similar to definitive alternate but duller, lacking the overall chestnut coloration of adults. Oberholser (1974) reports that in Glossy Ibis, alternate I ("first nuptial") is "practically identical" to definitive (adult) alternate, and in White-faced Ibis, alternate I is "similar to nuptial adults." The descriptions of the Minnesota birds clearly seem to preclude them being in alternate I plumage — there was no plumage character to suggest that they were.

Breeding Season: Incubation is 21 days, and another 50 days is spent in and around the nest (Palmer 1962). After that time, the young leave the nesting colony with the parents and fly to feeding grounds which may be some distance away. Thus, young undertake flights of some distance about ten weeks after incubation begins, and seven weeks after hatching. White-faced Ibis young are independent at age eight weeks (Ryder and Manry 1994), or 11 weeks after the onset of incubation. Backdating 11 weeks from 23 July results in about 7 May being the latest date for initiation of incubation that could have produced these young. Adding a week or two to allow for dispersal from the breeding grounds to Minnesota gives a reasonable incubation initiation date in late April. Texas egg dates are from 15 April to 6 June, with half occurring between 22 April and 19 May (Bent 1927), so the calculated late April date is within the peak incubation period in Texas. Bent also reported young in a Texas colony that were capable of flight (but not independent) on 19 May, nine weeks prior to this Minnesota record. Thus the chronology does not preclude the possibility that these birds were hatched earlier that year in Texas, Louisiana or Utah, for example, but they probably could not have come from the northern Great Plains, where egg dates are a month or more later, in June and July (Ryder and Manry 1994). If these birds were juvenile White-faced Ibis, the maximum age they could be is about 75–80 days after hatching, or 3–4 weeks after attaining the ability to fly freely (assuming a mid-April nest initiation).

Bill development: The bill was described by Hertzel as long and decurved, deeply grooved, bluish on the inner half and blending into a very dull pinkish-brown at the outer half. Svingen briefly noted the bill as dark gray, and Eckert did not comment on its color or shape. In the literature, there is some inconsistency in descriptions of bill development. When hatched, the young birds have banded bills that are pinkish overall, but dark basally, centrally and distally (Cramp and Simmons 1977). Bent (1927) states that this "parti-colored" bill is characteristic of juvenal plumage, and does not disappear until September. Hancock et al. (1992) also note that the bill stripes of nestlings may be retained into the first winter, during which time the bill gradually darkens. Oberholser (1974) describes the juvenile bill as pale greenish blue or pinkish white, dull black terminally and basally. Cramp and Simmons (1977) state that in juvenile Glossy Ibis, the bill at first is banded as in the nestling, but gradually it darkens to adult color from the ridge and tip of culmen onwards, last on the basal portion of the lower mandible. Newly fledged young are smaller than adults and have noticeably smaller and less down-curved bills, according to Hancock et al. (1992). The photo and description of bills of the Minnesota birds seem contrary to the descriptions presented above.

In the Bell Museum specimens, the bills of all three immatures (collected in

November) were shorter and paler than those of all three adults. Mean adult bill length (exposed culmen, not curvature) was 138 mm (range 137–140), while that of the immatures was only 103 mm (range 96–112). Thus, the immatures' bills were only about 3/4 the length of those of the adults. However, the bill lengths of these adults are near the upper range of measurements given by Oberholser (1974) for adult males (127–141.5 mm, average 135.6; sample size not given). Bills of adult females are substantially shorter than those of males (average, 108.7, range 99.6–115.6), and so these immature specimen bills (sex unknown) are only marginally shorter than those published for adult females, and the largest is well above the average. Also, young fledge at less than adult body size and remain smaller than adults for at least six months (Hancock *et al.* 1992); thus the smaller actual bill measurements of juveniles may be less noticeable without direct comparison with adults.

While the adult specimens' bills dried to a uniform dark blackish brown, those of the immatures were pale brownish, especially distally. However, the shape (curvature) of the immature bills was not notably different from that of the adults. These immatures were collected at Heron Lake and possibly were raised there as well since this species was known to nest at this location two years later. The age of these birds is unknown, but it is possible that they were only a month or two post fledging, since egg dates into late July occur in the northern part of its range (Ryder and Manry 1994). Thus it is possible that these immature specimens were similar in age to the Thielke Lake birds. At least one of these young (#8851) had a bill that appeared similar to that in the photo and description of the Minnesota birds (i.e., dark basally, paler distally and similar shape to those of adults), but of course it is difficult to compare soft part color of a dried specimen with that of a living bird.

Expert opinion: Two ibis authorities who were consulted on the age of these birds came to different conclusions after looking at photos and documentation. Prof. Ronald Ryder, in a phone conversation with Hertzel, felt they were subadults from the previous year (1993), based on bill color and size. Jon Dunn, in a letter to Hertzel dated 13 Feb. 1995, concluded that he believed the birds were young of the year (a few months old), and probably were White-faced Ibis, because in his experience the great majority of young Glossy Ibis, even in late July, show a conspicuous (or rather conspicuous) pale powder blue border above and below the gray skin of the lores — more conspicuous and different in color than that of the birds in question.

Conclusions: Hertzel presented a case for these being year-old birds, not juveniles, based on the date and bill development and color, a conclusion that was supported by Ryder (pers. comm. with Hertzel). Hertzel reasoned that if these were year-old birds, then they were most likely Glossy Ibis and not White-faced. One-year-old White-faced Ibis (i.e., in alternate I plumage) should exhibit reddish eyes and at least some red on the facial skin, whereas Glossy Ibis would lack red on those areas and instead would show dark eyes and gray facial skin with a trace of the bluish border. However, the plumage of these birds seems entirely consistent with juvenal plumage (of both species) and inconsistent with first alternate plumage. The late July date does not preclude them from being young of the year that had dispersed from breeding areas to the south or west. Although the described and photographed bill shape and color does suggest that the birds are older than a few months (i.e., are about one year old), Bell Museum specimens indicate they could be young of the year. In conclusion, it seems most likely that these birds were juveniles and as such cannot be identified to species.

Literature Cited

Bent, A.C. 1927. Life histories of North American marsh birds. Bull. U.S. Nat.

Mus. No. 135.
Cramp, S. and K.E.L. Simmons. 1977. Handbook of the birds of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, vol. 1. Oxford Univ. Press.
Hancock, J.A., J.A. Kushlan and M.P. Kahl. 1992. Storks, ibises and spoonbills of the world. Academic Press, London.
Kaufman, K. 1990. A field guide to advanced birding. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston.
Oberholser, H.C. 1974. The bird life of Texas. Univ. of Texas Press, Austin.
Palmer, R.S. 1962. Handbook of North American birds. Vol. 1, loons through flamingos. Yale Univ. Press, New Haven.
Pratt, H.D. 1976. Field identification of White-faced and Glossy ibises. Birding 8(1):1–5.
Ryder, R.R. and D.E. Manry. 1994. White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*). *In* The birds of North America, No. 130 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.). Philadelphia Acad. of Nat. Sciences.
4300 29th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55406.

The Varied Thrush in Minnesota

Peder Svingen

A remarkable "invasion" total of 41 Varied Thrushes was reported during 1994 – 95 in Minnesota, more than twice the number recorded in any previous year (July – June). This article analyzes all records of this western thrush for patterns of occurrence in the state.

The Varied Thrush *(Ixoreus naevius)* breeds in northwestern North America and wanders widely during migration, when it may be found in open woodland and stands of alder, as well as its preferred habitat of coniferous forest and deciduous forest with dense understory (A.O.U. 1983). The first published review (Lakela 1953) of the species in Minnesota omitted two of the five records now considered acceptable through 1953–54, including the first away from the North Shore of Lake Superior: one bird throughout the winter of 1943–44 in Crosby, Crow Wing County. Ten Minnesota records were included in a review of extralimital Varied Thrushes in North America (Keith 1968); interesting correspondence about these records resides in the M.O.U. files at the Bell Museum. All Minnesota reports of the Varied Thrush through at least 1970 were critically reviewed by Mrs. Janet C. Green for publication in *Minnesota Birds: Where, When, and How Many* (Green and Janssen 1975). The status of the Varied Thrush in Minnesota changed significantly beginning in the mid-1960s from Accidental to Regular (Janssen 1987). Eventually, 1987–88 was dubbed "The Winter of the Varied Thrush" (***The Loon*** 60:45) even though more birds (16) had been recorded in 1980–81.

Prior to 1960, only a handful of records accumulated following the first state record at Mrs. W. S. Telford's feeder in Duluth on 7 February – 4 April 1941 (*The Flicker* 13:18). Since most birds are discovered at feeding stations, an historical increase in bird feeding is an obvious factor contributing to this change in status. However, this article will show that

Varied Thrush, 21 November 1994, Columbia Heights, Hennepin County. Photo by Anthony Hertzel.

the pattern of occurrence since 1960 is cyclical — not merely linear. The cause is undoubtedly multifactorial and may include conditions on the breeding grounds, conditions (including weather) during migration, and conditions (including food supply) across the wintering range.

In Keith's 1968 review, he offered several hypotheses after analyzing 132 extralimital records of the Varied Thrush in North America, involving 142 individuals. Keith proposed that Varied Thrushes migrating in an east-southeasterly direction from northwestern Alberta arrive in northeastern Minnesota during September – November while a slight southerly shift in direction results in a central or southern Minnesota arrival during October – December. Lending support to this hypothesis is the fact that most of Wisconsin's 136 records (through April 1987) lie within 60 miles of a line extending in a southeasterly direction from Port Washington to Grantsburg (Robbins 1991). It was further noted by Keith that birds could arrive in northern Minnesota without ever leaving familiar coniferous habitat by remaining north of the temperate grasslands which extend into central Saskatchewan and southwestern Manitoba.

Arrival dates provide clues to understanding migration patterns. To the northwest of central Minnesota, North Dakota has earliest arrival dates of 26, 27 (twice), and 28 September, also 1 (twice), 11, 25, and 28 October (Gordon Berkey, unpublished data). South Dakota's earliest of about three dozen state records was 29 August 1971 in Belle Fourche (S.D.O.U. 1991); one is in Sioux Falls on 18 September 1987 (*American Birds* 42:95) and another was in Marshall County, South

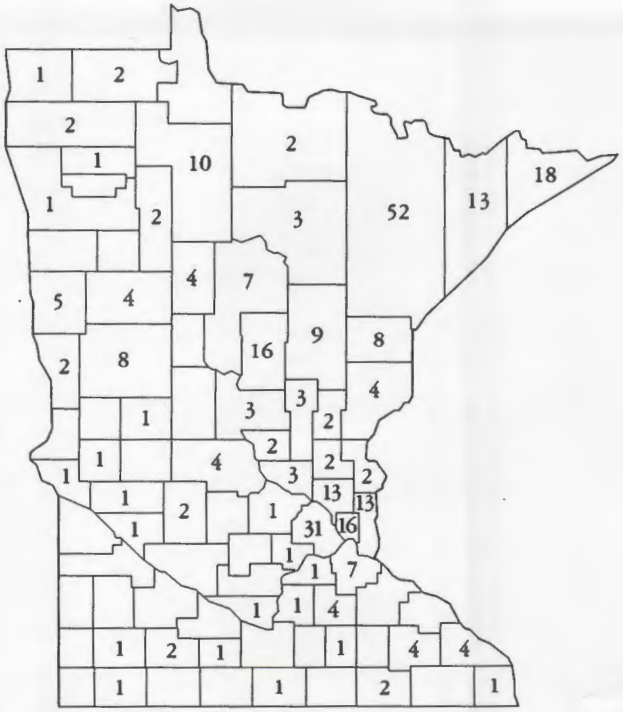


Figure 1. Map of Minnesota showing numbers of Varied Thrush records per county, July 1940 – June 1995.

Dakota on 28 September 1989 (*American Birds* 44:113). Minnesota's earliest fall dates are 16 September 1990 in Wilkin County, 20 September 1981 in Duluth, and 26 September 1974 in Hennepin County. There are twelve Minnesota records for October through 1994: five in St. Louis County (16, 18, 22, 30, 30), two each in Cook (6, 10), Hennepin (22, 31), and Ramsey (26, 30) counties, and one in Roseau County (18 October 1991). Wisconsin's earliest dates are 22 October 1980 and 26 October 1944 in Dane County, 26 October 1984 in Sheboygan County, and two other late October dates (Robbins 1991).

Method

I reviewed seasonal reports, notes of interest, and Christmas Bird Counts summaries published in *The Flicker/**The Loon*** from Volume 13 (1941) to the present. The most recent 20 CBC issues of *American Birds* were also reviewed since CBC data are not always published in ***The Loon***. Varied Thrush records for 1994–95 were gleaned from observers' seasonal report forms and transcripts of the Duluth and statewide bird reports, provided by Kim Eckert and Anthony Hertzel, respectively. The M.O.U. species file was reviewed and all records were then compiled by county. Copies of each list were mailed to individuals residing in, or knowledgeable about, that county for their review. Among the 57 county lists distributed for review, 16 (28%) elicited no response. Dakota, Lake, Ramsey, Rice, and Washington counties each had four or more unreviewed records, although none of these were excluded. The Varied Thrush is distinctive so misidentification (especially of adult males) is very unlikely. Nevertheless, I am responsible for

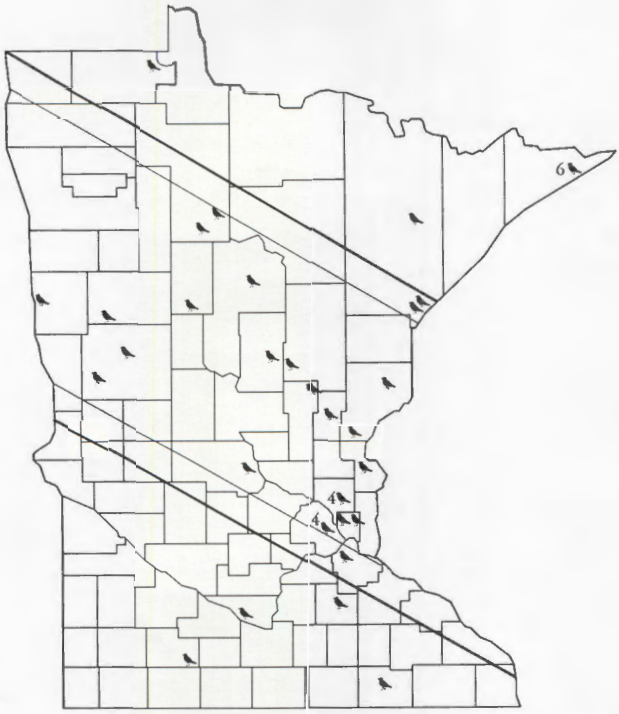


Figure 2. Map of Minnesota showing locations of Varied Thrush records for July 1994 – June 1995 (n=41). Pine City – Ada corridor also depicted (see text).

inclusion of dubious sight records. On the other hand, more than two dozen previously unpublished records surfaced, erroneous dates were corrected, and locations for most records were specified, allowing better distinction among records within a specific county.

All available records were then sorted by location, year (July – June), arrival month, and habitat (coniferous forest *vs.* prairie and deciduous forest). Records were also stratified by number of months that birds were present in a given location. A bird present for any portion of a month was counted for that month and "overwintering" records were counted for December – February if exact dates were not available, using the same approach as Keith (1968). Records of multiple individuals in the same location were treated as one record except when comparing prevalence of Varied Thrushes in coniferous forest *vs.* prairie and deciduous forest. The line from Port Washinton to Grantsburg, Wisconsin (Robbins 1991) was extended through Minnesota on a standard regional highway map; this line ran roughly from Pine City to Ada. I hypothesized that Varied Thrushes arrive earlier and stay longer in the coniferous forest areas of Minnesota. I also hypothesized that most Minnesota records occur in a southeasterly swath which recapitulates the pattern shown by Robbins for Wisconsin.

Results

A total of 312 records of the Varied Thrush through June 1995 was found; the species has occurred in 57 of Minnesota's 87 counties (Figure 1). The east – central region (see Janssen 1987 for definition of regions) led the way with 93 records, 83 of these in the metro area. Close behind

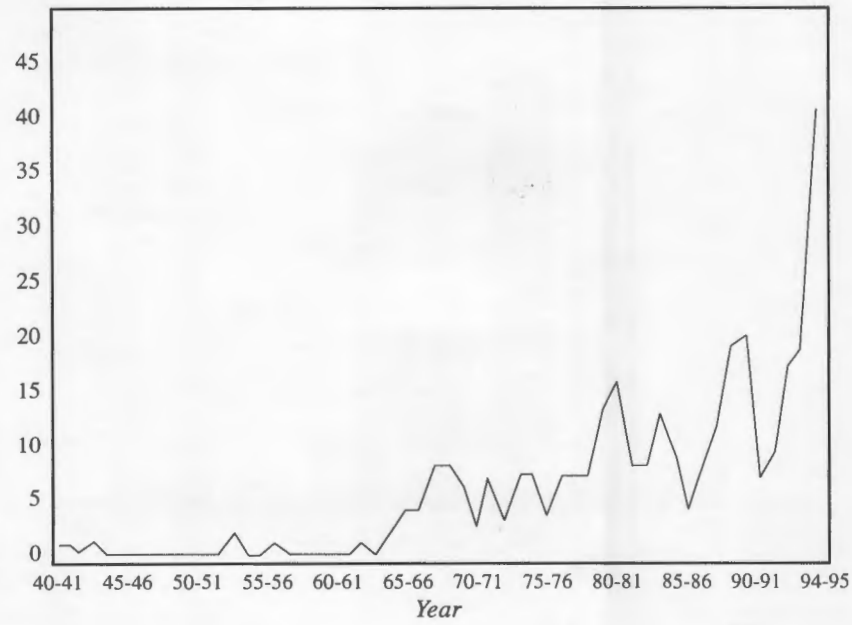


Figure 3. Varied Thrush records graphed by season (July to June) from 1940 to the present (n=312).

was the northeast region with 91 records while the north central region contributed 53 records. Together, the northeast and north central regions approximate the coniferous forest in Minnesota. The other six regions all had twenty or fewer records with only four records from the southwest.

Invasion Records. The 1994–95 total of 41 records (Figure 2) is more than double the number from any previous year! As usual, the metro area and the North Shore of Lake Superior had most of the records. A majority of this year's records fell within 60 miles of a line drawn from Pine City to Ada.

County Records. It is not surprising, considering its vast coniferous forests, that St. Louis County has the most records of any county, in fact Duluth alone has more records (38) than any county except St. Louis! The lack of any record from Lake of the Woods County apparently reflects a lack of observers. The 34 records from Hennepin County are noteworthy; besides the concentration of observers at feeders there, migration along the Mississippi River corridor probably concentrates thrushes in the metro area. Considering its southeasterly movements and habitat preferences during migration, Varied Thrushes must be overlooked in Wadena and Todd counties.

Yearly Variation. An overall trend of increasing records beginning in the mid–1960s is probably best explained by more bird feeders, more observers, better reporting, and improved identification aids. However, the data also show periodic trends (Figure 3) that are typical of irruptive species. Beginning in 1979–80 there has been a significant increase in records every four or five years.

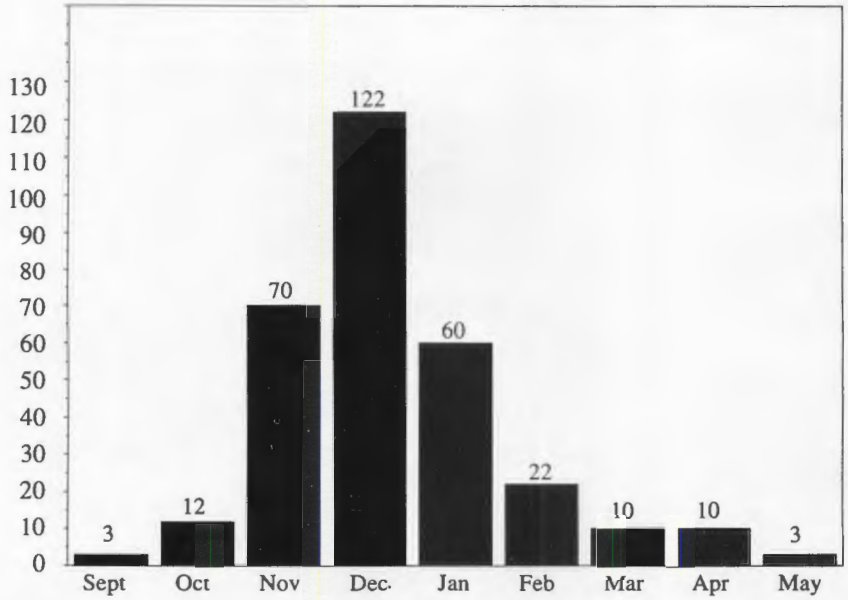


Figure 4. Distribution of Varied Thrush records by month of arrival from 1940 to the present (n-312).

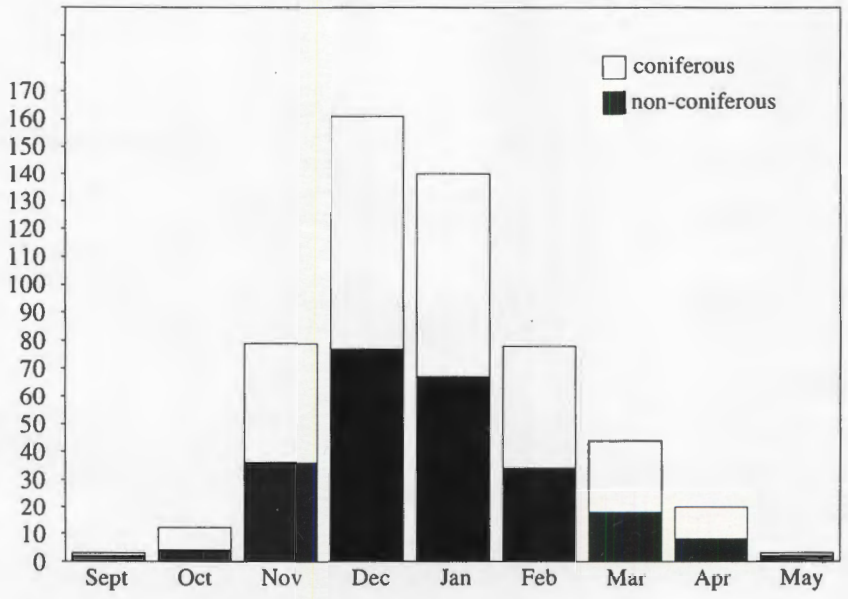


Figure 5. Number of Varied Thrushes in coniferous forest, and in prairie and deciduous forest, by months of occurrence (see text).

Arrival Dates. The vast majority of Varied Thrushes in Minnesota are first discovered in December (Figure 4). Approximately 80% of birds apparently arrive during November – January. Individuals first discovered in March – May are more likely returning spring migrants but may be wandering from wintering areas. Arrival dates in coniferous forest (n=157) are similar to arrival dates in prairie and deciduous forest (n=155) except for October – November (total number of records 46 *vs.* 36, data not shown). Thus, the earliest fall arrivals are more likely to appear in coniferous forest areas.

Months of Occurrence. There is marginal evidence that individuals persist at locations in coniferous forest areas, compared to prairie and deciduous forest (Figure 5). Differences are most apparent after January. Records involving multiple individuals (each treated separately on Figure 5) account for much of the difference in December and January; Minnesota has nine such records (approximately 26 individuals) in coniferous forest areas and three records (nine individuals) in prairie and deciduous forest areas.

Southeasterly Corridor. The 120 mile-wide corridor proposed by Robbins (see above) bisects Hennepin County and misses Duluth entirely, yet still contains "most" of Minnesota's 312 records (n=165, 52%). Expanding the corridor to 80 miles on either side of the Pine City–Ada line includes all of Hennepin County and Duluth; the swath then captures 76% (n=240) of all records. These two corridors are depicted on Figure 2 (data not shown).

Discussion

The phenomenology of the Varied Thrush in Minnesota appears complex and cannot be ascribed only to prevalence of bird feeders. The Fargo–Moorhead and St. Cloud areas have substantial populations (and presumably lots of feeders) but relatively few Varied Thrush records. Even in the Twin Cities metro area, heavily populated Carver and Scott counties have only one record each. Crow Wing County boasts an impressive 16 records with its coniferous forest, portions of the Mississippi River and active observers; the county also is centered on the Pine City – Ada corridor.

Except for three times as many records involving multiple individuals, more arrivals in October – November, and a tendency to persist after January, there are few significant differences between birds in coniferous forest areas and those in prairie and deciduous forest areas. Analysis by exact date rather than month might reveal additional trends. Although the majority of Minnesota's 312 records can be captured by a 120–160 mile southeasterly swath across the state, the significance of this remains unclear.

The total of 41 records for 1994–95 apparently represents an invasion. It will be interesting to follow Minnesota records of the Varied Thrush over the next few years — will the overall increasing trend continue? Will the apparent irruptive pattern of the past 16 years persist? Will someone find one of the Varied Thrushes in Lake of the Woods and Wadena counties that are most certainly present?

Acknowledgements

Betsy Beneke, Gordon Berkey, Jo and Steve Blanich, Steve Carlson, Ed Duerksen, Kim Eckert, Bob Ekblad, Herbert and Jeanette Fisher, Randy Frederickson, Ray Glassel, Molly and Ken Hoffman, Nancy Jackson, Robert Janssen, Doug Johnson, Ron and Rose Kneeskern, Ken Lafond, David Lambeth, Steve Millard, Warren Nelson, Gary Nielsen, Robert O'Connor, Joanie Robinson, Carol Schumacher, and Shelley Steva reviewed county records and greatly improved the accuracy of data presented in this paper. Janet Green's review of early records and correspondence with Allan R. Keith greatly facilitated my own research. Karl Bardon helped with timely access to the M.O.U. species file and Anthony Hertzel designed the maps and graphs used in this article.

Literature Cited

American Ornithologists' Union. 1983. Check-list of North American birds, sixth edition. Allen Press, Lawrence. 877 pages.

Green, J. C. and R. B. Janssen. 1975. Minnesota Birds: where, when, and how many. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis. 217 pages.

Janssen, R. B. 1987. Birds in Minnesota. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis. 352 pages.

Keith, A. R. 1968. Extralimital records of the Varied Thrush. *Bird-Banding* 34:245–276.

Lakela, O. 1953. The Varied Thrush in the Interior. *The Flicker* 25:143–144.

Robbins, S. D. 1991. Wisconsin Birdlife. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison. 702 pages.

South Dakota Ornithologists' Union. 1991. The Birds of South Dakota, second edition. Northern State University Press, Aberdeen. 411 pages.

2602 East Fourth Street, Duluth, MN 55812–1533.

Minnesota's Mini-Falcon

M. L. Webster

While jogging along Iowa Interstate 35, Ron Andrews noticed a number of small birds hovering above the grassy right-of-ways undeterred by passing cars and trucks. More birds perched on overhead power lines. As their sharp eyes caught the slightest movement in the grass below, they dove with lightening speed to capture a victim in powerful claws, usually a mouse or an insect.

"Kestrels," smiled Andrews, a biologist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. "And I thought, if kestrels hunt along busy highways, will they also nest there?" In 1983, with the help of local Boy Scouts, he attached 20 nest boxes to the back of information signs along Iowa's interstate highways.

Thus was born the nest box program that has since spread to several states, including boxes adjacent to the ear-splitting runways of Dulles International Airport in northern Virginia. "There's not much that bothers a kestrel when he's hunting," explained Andrews.

In 1986 John Schladweiler, Department of Natural Resources and Regional Director in New Ulm, brought the idea to Minnesota. Through the joint efforts of the Nongame Wildlife Program, the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Transportation, together with community volunteers, nest boxes were attached to the backs of Interstate 90 highway signs in southern Minnesota, at intervals of one-half mile. "Today, there are more than 100 such boxes between the South Dakota border and the town of Blue Earth," said Schladweiler.

This program has continued to expand throughout Minnesota, with boxes established along many of our four-lane highways. Because nest sites are placed approximately 30 feet above ground, they are usually attached to tall green Interstate signs.

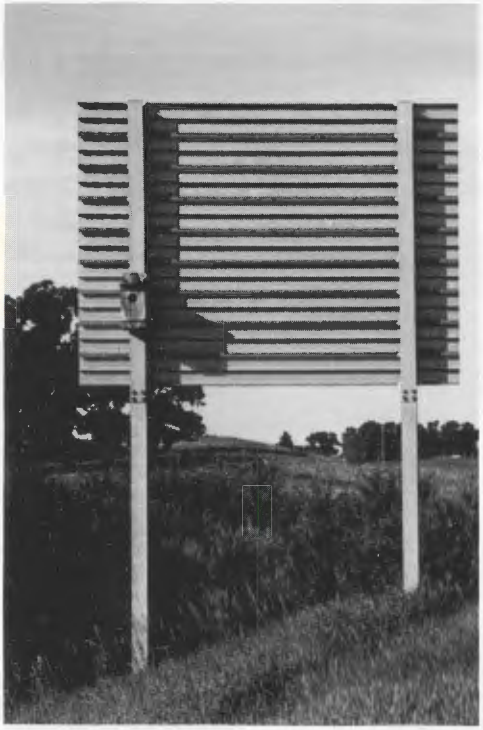
Ironically, open right-of-ways and cloverleaves provide the ideal feeding ground for kestrels. Grassy areas harbor the birds' favorite prey — insects, snakes, and rodents, with little danger from four-footed predators. The slick steel supports that hold the highway signs provide additional protection. Surprisingly, few kestrels raised in the nest boxes die in highway collisions with vehicles.

Once known as the "sparrow hawk"

American Kestral in nestbox with young.

because of its size, or the "grasshopper hawk" because of its fondness for insects, the kestrel is not a true hawk but the smallest member of the falcon family. It is also the most frequently sighted falcon in the United States, and ranges widely in the Americas, from coast to coast and Canada southward through two continents to Tierra Del Fuego. During the middle ages, the kestrel was used for hunting small birds: the poor man's answer to the sport of falconry.

Slightly larger than a robin, the bird measurers nine to 12 inches in length, has a short neck, a small head, and a pointed wingspan of 24 to 29 inches. Both sexes have rufous red backs and tails, with dark whisker-like marks on the sides of their heads. Males are slightly smaller than females, with blue-gray wings, while females have brown wings. The sexes also differ in temperament, with the female the dominant partner. Before the encroachment of civilization, American Kestrels nested in natural cavities of dead or dying trees near open grasslands. But urban sprawl, farmland, and an expanding highway system left



American Kestral nestbox.

kestrels fewer and fewer sites for their nests, and the population began to decline. The nest box program has helped to reverse this situation by providing an ideal substitute for the lost trees.

As the temperature rises in early April, males arrive to establish nesting territories. Soon, the females arrive and wait to be enticed into nesting sites by food-carrying males. It is the female who selects her mate. Kestrels are an extremely vocal bird, with shrill cries echoing out from morning to night: *killy, killy, killy.*

Both male and female kestrels incubate the four or five cream-and-brown speckled eggs, usually 29 to 31 days. They also share in the feeding of the young, with female chicks given preferential treatment over the males. The young develop rapidly, leaving the nest 28 to 30 days after hatching, but remain dependant upon their parents for two to three more weeks.

Each spring, biologists and volunteers from various community and fraternal organizations brave Minnesota freeway traffic to climb 30 foot ladders. They hang new boxes and clean or repair old boxes, placing three to four inches of new wood chips in the bottom of each box. Thereafter, the nest sites are checked "about every ten days," said John Schladweiler, "to prevent the unwanted invasion of starlings." With the current occupancy rate at about 40 to 45 percent, similar to that of other states, the success of the program is visible in the large number of kestrels hunting near established nest sites.

Of all birds of prey, the kestrel is the most helpful to the farmer as it feeds mainly on grasshoppers, beetles, and mice. Also, they have brought to public awareness the importance of roadside environments to Minnesota wildlife.

Service and community groups such as the Boy Scouts and Lutheran Brotherhood build and donate the boxes. Building materials are also donated or purchased by the Wildlife Program using the "chickadee checkoff" funds, said Schladweiler. To participate in this volunteer program, contact the nearest regional Nongame specialist, or call The Department of Natural Resources in Saint Paul, (800–766–6000, or 612–297–1440) for additional information.

References

Birds of America, John James Audubon, vol 1, pp 1–5.

Iowa Department of Natural Resources Nongame Wildlife Program, Wildlife Research Station, Rural Route 1, Boone, Iowa 50036.

John Schladweiler, DNR, New Ulm, MN.

Minneapolis Star Tribune, 5 and 16 Sept, 1993.

Minnesota Raptor Center.

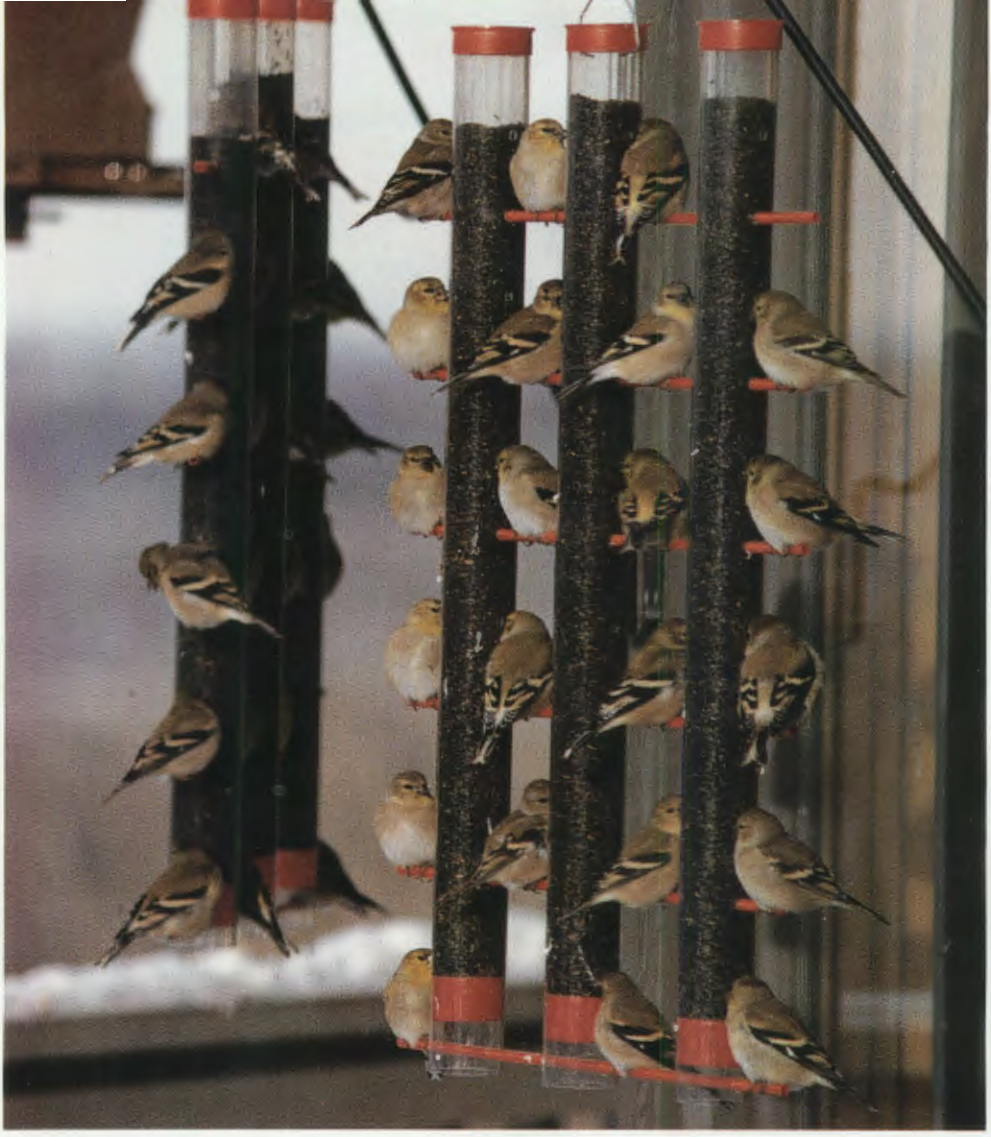
National Wildlife Magazine, August-September, 1991, pp 18–25.

New Scientist, August 1992, pp 22–26.

Sports Afield, January 1994, p 22.

World Book Encyclopedia, Vols 7 & 11.

5200 Nicollet S., Minneapolis, MN 55419.



American Goldfinches, January 1995, Dakota County. Photo by David A. Cahlander.

The Winter Season
(1 December 1994 to 28 February 1995)

Karl Bardon

Particularly mild weather induced many unusual species to linger into the winter season, resulting in a record 157 species being reported. Highlights included the first winter records of Calliope and Ruby-throated Humming-

birds, Yellow-throated Warbler, and Lark Sparrow. Many irruptive species, especially most northern owls and finches, were generally absent, but both Long-eared Owls and Varied Thrushes were seen in unprecedented numbers.

Above normal temperatures in late November continued throughout most of December except for a brief cold snap on 11 December when -3° was recorded in the Twin Cities, the coldest day of the month. Late December was 10–20° above normal statewide, climaxing on Christmas Day when it was 45° in the Twin Cities and 52° in Winona.

With the unusually mild conditions, much of the lake ice remained unstable, and open water was reported as far north as Rainy and Kabetogoma Lakes in Voyageurs National Park in late December for the first time in history. The first significant arctic air mass moved into the state in early January, pushing lows on 4 January to -11° in the Twin Cities and -23° at International Falls. This cooler weather was short-lived however, as conditions quickly returned to above normal statewide. On 31 January, temperatures climbed to a record 46° in the Twin Cities and 51° at Redwood Falls. December and January were the warmest on record since 1942. February averaged cooler, with arctic fronts bringing peak lows of -30° at International Falls on 6 February, the lowest temperature in the state for the winter, and -11 on 11 February in the Twin Cities. Temperatures during the last few days of February were not warm enough to bring many early migrants into the state.

Snowfall was light in the south and moderately heavy in the north late in the season. Although storms dumped a foot of snow on the North Shore on 10 January and 14 February, and eight inches on 25 February, these storms brought little but freezing rain to the southern part of the state, with many areas frequently snow-free.

Four species of grebes were seen in December, including a **Western Grebe** that lingered long enough at Lake Calhoun, Hennepin County to tie the latest date on record. Many species of ducks were found in greater numbers than normal; **Green-winged Teal**, **Northern Pintail**, **Gadwall**, **Canvasback**, **Redhead**, and **Lesser Scaup** all received at least twice as many reports as usual. Up to seven **Harlequin Ducks** were reported along the North Shore of Lake Superior, including at least two males between the French River and Stony Point all season, providing the first documentation of this species overwintering on Lake Superior. Other sea ducks also made news when as many as four **Oldsqauw** were reported at different locations in the greater Twin Cities area, including one that spent many weeks at a small aerated pond in Edina! Two December reports of **Black Scoters** in Cook and Wabasha counties were the latest dates on record, and individual **White-winged Scoters** in Dakota County in December and Wabasha County in February were respectively the latest and earliest migrants on record. For the first time in many years, a **Barrow's Goldeneye** overwintered in the Twin Cities, giving many observers a chance to view this casual species. In addition to this adult male reported from the Mississippi River in St. Paul and Black Dog Lake in Burnsville, there was also a well-documented report of a female Barrow's Goldeneye at the St. Paul location in early January.

After a "stratospheric" flight of **Bald Eagles** at Hawk Ridge last fall (***The Loon*** 67:78) it was not surprising to have new records set for the number of counties in which this species was reported, and for

the total number tallied on the Christmas Bird Counts. Other raptors were reported in record numbers as well, including **Red-tailed** and **Rough-legged Hawks**, the latter staging in the Sax-Zim bog area of southern St. Louis County where a remarkable 139 were counted on the local CBC. These birds were almost entirely gone by late January however. Although **Sharp-shinned** and **Cooper's Hawks** were reported in record numbers, **Northern Goshawk** reports were down, as is expected during this latter species current population cycle low. Both **Northern Harriers** and **Short-eared Owls**, two species which are dependent on microtine rodents, were reported in above average numbers.

The real news among owls however, was the remarkable numbers of **Long-eared Owls**, with many found roosting in large groups, including 16 in one pine stand in Dakota County, and eight in one willow tree in Hennepin County! This seldom seen species is usually hard to find at any season. In contrast, most northern owls were notable by their virtual absence: few reports of **Snowy**, **Great Gray**, **Northern Hawk**, and **Boreal Owls** were received.

Gull watchers had a banner season, since a record nine species were found, including several late **Bonaparte's Gulls**. Among the casual species (which seem regular because they are reported so often), the Twin Cities had both an adult and a first-winter **Iceland Gull** at Black Dog Lake, as well as the usual adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, which has now been seen at the metro area lakes for the third consecutive year. Duluth had both a first-winter **Great Black-backed Gull** and a first-winter **Black-legged Kittiwake**, the latter bird only the third winter record and the latest date ever.

The most outstanding bird of the season, already reported on extensively in previous issues of ***The Loon***, was the **Calliope Hummingbird** coming to a feeder since early November. Almost as remarkable was the presence of a *second* species of hummingbird, a Ruby-throated, at a feeder in Goodhue County, which died on 7 December, thus becoming the latest date on record by a month.

A long list of unusual late-lingering passerines was found, including some that even overwintered. Most of these reports came from the Long Meadow Lake area in the Minnesota River Valley, Hennepin County, including the heavily birded Bass Ponds. The following list of species reported here gives an idea of what it was like to bird at a single ideal location during the winter of 1994–95: the state's first documented overwintering **Marsh Wren**, a **Winter Wren**, multiple **Song** and **Swamp Sparrows**, the sixth December record of a **Common Yellowthroat**, overwintering **Hermit Thrush** and **Common Snipe**, a February **Virginia Rail** which probably overwintered, and a December **Gray Catbird**. The total list sounds more appropriate for spring or fall birding than winter!

Exciting passerine finds away from the Bass Ponds area included the state's first winter record of a **Lark Sparrow**, found in Faribault, Rice County nearly two months later than any previous date. Also noteworthy were two records of **Chipping Sparrow**, one in Cook County and another in Hennepin County, the latter individual apparently only the third overwintering record. The state's thirteenth **Yellow-throated Warbler** was found two months later than any previous date when it died at a feeder in Rockford, Wright County on 10 December. The handsome **Varied Thrush** was welcomed into the state in numbers more than double that of any previous influx.

The *Fringillid* ("winter") finch flight was not quite as dismal as previously thought once all the reports were tallied, at least in the north; in the south, the picture truly was dismal, since most of the northern finches were almost entirely

absent. **Pine Grosbeaks** were quite abundant in the far north, but virtually absent in the south for the fourth straight year. Both **Red** and **White-winged Crossbills** were present in better numbers than the past few years, although reports were also almost entirely in the north. The **Common Redpoll** flight was one of the worst on record, but as in 1993 when few redpolls were reported, **American Goldfinches** and **Pine Siskins** were particularly abundant in the north. Is there enough competition between these three species of *Carduelis* to allow the siskins and goldfinches to winter unusually far north when the redpolls are absent? **Evening Grosbeaks** were not common in the north, and absent in the south. Commenting on the continued lack of most northern finches in the south, some observers suggested that the increase in feeders in northern areas has given finches no incentive to move southward during recent years.

This report summarizes the observations of over 80 seasonal contributors and 44 Christmas Bird Counts, similar coverage to other recent years. Composite species totals for the season during the last ten years (1994–1985) have ranged from 128 to 149, with an average of 142, making this season's 157 species all the more remarkable. Compare this to an average of 136 species for the preceding ten year period (1975–1984). Of even further interest is Robert's account of the winter bird life in Minnesota 60 years ago (*Birds of Minnesota,* 1934). He listed 112 species recorded during the winter season (there have now been well over 200), of which only 69 were considered regular. A good winter day's birding produced 10–12 species, and Christmas Bird Counts recorded 2–16 species! This year, the Bloomington CBC pushed the total number of species possible within a count circle to an all-time record 66 species! This increase in the numbers of species found during winter is probably a natural outcome of several factors, including the general increase in the number of observers, our knowledge of winter birds and how to find them, and our means of travel throughout the state. New species for the winter season are added virtually every year. One can only wonder what the next winter season will offer!

1430 – 100th Ave NW #212, Coon Rapids MN 55433.

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 bold **(10/9)** indicate an occurrence either earlier, later or within the earliest or latest dates on file.
3. Counties listed in bold **(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.

The Season publishes reports of bird sightings from 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, request a report form from the Editor of *The Season*, Peder Svingen, 2602 East 4th St, Duluth, MN 55812.

Common Loon
A late migrant reported until 12/10 on Lake Calhoun, Hennepin Co. mob.

Pied-billed Grebe
Two reports of late migrants until 12/11 Hennepin mob and on the St. Paul CBC, and one report of a possible early migrant **2/23** Cottonwood ED.

Horned Grebe
Two reports: 1/15 on Lake Superior, St. Louis Co. JG (overwintering?), and more unusual, on the Grand Rapids CBC (no details).

Red-necked Grebe
Four reports, more than usual: two reports from Lake Superior, St. Louis Co. on **12/10–17** MH *et al.*, then again **2/9–26** *fide* KE (different location). Most unusual were the reports of two seen on **12/17** on the Mississippi River, Wright Co. PKL, and one seen on the Bemidji CBC.

Western Grebe
Late migrant reported until **12/10** on Lake Calhoun, Hennepin Co. mob. Ties the latest date on record and only the fifth winter report.

American White Pelican
Five "flightless cripples" overwintered at Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co. BF, mob. One also probably overwintered at Albert Lea, Freeborn Co. where reported on the Albert Lea CBC and on 1/25 PKL. These are typical locations for this species in winter. More unusual was one apparently overwintering at Bayport, Washington Co. where reported on the St. Paul NE CBC and on 2/20 BL (presumably same bird).

Double-crested Cormorant
Overwintered at Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co. mob (up to five seen in December, but only two apparently overwintered), and at Rochester, Olmsted Co. mob (only one reported).

Great Blue Heron
Reported from twelve counties as far north as Otter Tail. Despite mild weather, the only overwintering report was from the Pigs Eye Lake outlet, Ramsey Co. where eight were seen on 1/2 AH, and seven still present on 1/21 JD. The reports 1/30 Otter Tail BBe and 2/2 Brown BBo may also represent overwintering; most other reports were in December and early January, with one additional report in late February: 2/20 Goodhue HH. CBC total 10.

Tundra Swan
Reported on the Mississippi River in the southeast region on the LaCrosse CBC and until 12/28 Winona CS, but no large concentrations reported here despite mild weather. One possibly overwintered in Otter Tail where reported 12/17 SDM and 2/19 SKS. Reports on the Lac Qui Parle, Faribault and Rochester CBCs lacked details and are more likely Trumpeter Swans.

[TRUMPETER SWAN]
Number overwintering on Mississippi River at Monticello, Sherburne/Wright counties continues to grow where up to **117** seen on 2/15 KB. Also reported in December and February from Otter Tail (number and overwintering status unknown), and on the Wild River (2) and Excelsior (2) CBCs. These were presumably all from regional release programs.

Snow Goose
Most unusual was one blue morph reported overwintering at **Duluth, St. Louis Co.** mob. Less unexpected was one blue morph overwintering for the fourth year at Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co. mob. Also reported 12/3 Hennepin JW, 12/4 Anoka PKL (2), on the Morris (35) and Lac qui Parle (1) CBCs, on the Rochester CBC and again 1/2 Olmsted mob (3), 1/25 Hennepin SW (3), and 2/19 Otter Tail SKS. Some reports in the Twin Cities may be of domesticated type birds (see last winter's report).

Canada Goose
Reported from 38 counties with overwin-

tering noted as far north as Beltrami. CBC total 92,750 with high counts of 49,000 on the Lac qui Parle CBC and 23,700 on the Rochester CBC.

Wood Duck
Reported from 15 counties with overwintering noted in Olmsted, Dakota, Hennepin, and Kandiyohi. Only north reports 12/4 Otter Tail SDM, and on the Bemidji and Grand Rapids CBCs. CBC total 21.

Green-winged Teal
Overwintered at Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co. where a flock of **23** reported by PJ, by far the largest number ever reported during winter. The average number of reports during the past ten winters is three, and usually only single birds are seen. Also reported on the St. Paul CBC (1), 12/17–18 Anoka JH (2), 1/1 Ramsey JD, 1/5 Goodhue DS (2), 2/18 Olmsted CK, and 2/24 Rice TBo.

American Black Duck
Reported from 19 counties mostly in the eastern and central regions. Only report west in Otter Tail. CBC total an average 95 individuals.

Mallard
Reported from 42 counties throughout the state. CBC total 23,718; probably a record number. High count 7,422 on the St. Paul CBC.

Northern Pintail
Twice the usual number of reports. Reported from eight counties with overwintering in Dakota mob (3–4) and Hennepin SC (1). Only north report 12/17–29 **Duluth** mob (1).

Northern Shoveler
Lingering migrants reported 12/10 Winona CS, until 12/11 Hennepin mob (25+), and until 1/7 Scott mob.

Gadwall
More than twice the usual number of reports. Reported from 17 counties with overwintering noted as usual in Twin Cities in Scott and Dakota, plus additional flocks overwintering at Whitewater WMA and at Prairie Island, both in Winona Co. Most other reports were in December and February. Peak of 50 on 12/31 at Whitewater WMA DN. CBC total 56.

American Wigeon
Probably overwintered in Hennepin where reported until 1/23 mob. Also reported 12/6 Winona CS, on the Fergus Falls (2) and Excelsior CBCs, 12/18 Houston PKL, 1/1 Scott JD, and 2/27 Winona OJ.

Canvasback
Many more reports than usual. Reported from 11 counties south, with overwintering in Dakota mob and probably Scott (until 2/1 mob). Other reports were in December and early January, with two additional reports in late Ferburary: **2/25** Rice TBo and Cottonwood ED (early migrants?). Unusual north report on the **Fergus Falls** CBC. There has not been a north report in winter since 1975–76!

Redhead
Twice the usual number of reports. Reported from ten counties with overwintering in Olmsted mob and probably Scott (until 2/1 mob). Other reports mostly in December and early January with one late February report (2/23 Cottonwood ED). Only north reports 12/3 Clay CF and 12/17 Otter Tail SDM.

Ring-necked Duck
Reported from ten counties with overwintering in Hennepin mob and probably Scott (until 2/1 mob). Other reports were of late migrants in December and early January. Only north reports 12/15 Cook KMH and 12/20 St. Louis AB.

Greater Scaup
Reported 12/5–6 Hennepin AB, RG, 12/8 Winona CS, and 12/19 Dakota DS. The five–six birds at Lake Calhoun, Hennepin Co. were reported as Greaters by some and Lessers by others; reports of Greater Scaup in winter should include details.

Lesser Scaup
Most reports since 1982. Reported from 17 counties with overwintering noted in **Beltrami**. Other possible wintering birds include until 1/14 Ottertail mob, until 1/27 Scott mob, until 1/29 Dakota mob, 2/5 Olmsted CK, and 2/5 St. Louis (Virginia Power Plant) KB. Other reports were of late migrants in December and early January, and early migrants in February with the earliest 2/18–20 Winona mob. High count of 67 on 12/2 Hubbard HJF.

Harlequin Duck
More reports than usual, all on Lake Superior. Two to three present between French River and Stoney Point, St. Louis Co. all winter for the first overwintering record on the North Shore. The latest any previous North Shore bird was known to stay is 2/4. Two birds reported on 2/5 from Knife River, Lake Co. DPV (possibly same as St. Louis Co. birds?). Also two Cook Co. reports, possibly representing the same individual: 1/5–21 in Grand Marais mob, and on 12/9 at Paradise Beach SOL.

Oldsquaw
Lake Superior reports throughout winter in Cook Co. (number unknown), and 12/28 St. Louis *fide* KE (2). More than usual number of reports away from Lake Superior, with immature/female type bird reported 12/19–1/15 at a small pond in Edina, Hennepin Co. mob; 12/19 at Blue Lake, Scott Co. SC, JD; 12/22–23 at Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co. PJ, DN; and 1/23 and 2/1 along the Mississippi River, Wright Co. KB. Overlap in dates suggests at least three birds were seen.

Black Scoter
Two unusual December reports of late migrants: **12/2** Cook DS and 11/9–**12/10** Wabasha BF. These are the latest dates on record; only one previous winter record in January 1972.

White-winged Scoter
Lingering migrant reported **12/17–20** Dakota mob (a tie with the latest south date on record), and a probable early migrant **2/25–27** Wabasha JSt *et al.* (earliest migrant on record). Both reported with details.

Common Goldeneye
Reported from 26 counties in all regions of the state except the northwest. Apparently overwintered throughout this area except the southwest region where reported only in December and February. Peak 1800 on the Mississippi River at Monticello, Wright Co. KB. CBC total 926.

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE
Adult male reported 12/25–1/10 on the Mississippi River, Ramsey Co. AH (***The Loon*** 67:176–177), and 1/20–29 at Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co. mob (details provided). Although there were no February reports, this bird apparently overwintered since what was presumably the same bird was reported again at Black Dog Lake in March. An adult female also reported 1/1–2 on the Mississippi River, Ramsey Co. WW *et al.* (***The Loon*** 67:61-62).

Bufflehead
Reported from 12 counties with overwintering noted in Beltrami. Mid-winter reports on Lake Superior in Lake and Cook, on the Mississippi River in Wright, at the Blue Lake sewage plant, Scott Co., and at the Bass Ponds, Hennepin Co. Other reports were of late migrants in December and early January (five reports), and two possible early migrants in February: 2/19 Otter Tail SKS and 2/18 Dakota PJ, DN.

Hooded Merganser
Number overwintering continues to increase. Reported from 12 counties with overwintering noted in Mower, Dakota, Wright and Beltrami. One mid-winter report 1/19 St. Louis (Virginia Power Plant) SWMS. Other reports were of lingering migrants in December (seven reports), and one possible early migrant in February (2/23 Cottonwood ED).

Common Merganser
Reported in a total of 20 counties with

overwintering noted from Sherburne/ Wright southeastward (mostly along the Mississippi River), and on Lake Superior in St. Louis and Lake. Late concentrations noted on 12/2 at Leech Lake, Cass Co. PKL (3500), and on 12/10 at Lake Pepin, Goodhue and Wabasha counties BF (15,000).

Red-breasted Merganser
Lake Superior reports (probably overwintering) included 1/21 St. Louis PS, 1/24 Cook KMH, and 2/7 Lake KB. Late migrants reported 12/10 Hennepin SC, and on the Lac qui Parle CBC.

Ruddy Duck
Only reports of late migrants until 12/10 Hennepin SC, and on the Fergus Falls CBC.

Bald Eagle
Reported from a record 48 counties throughout the state with overwintering noted as far north as Marshall, Koochiching and Cook. CBC total of 242 individuals, another record.

Northern Harrier
Seven reports, more than usual: 12/11–24 Dakota mob, 12/12–1/7 St. Louis mob, the Albert Lea and Warren CBCs, 2/4 Dakota PJ, 2/20 Fillmore AH, and 2/24 Martin DBr.

Sharp-shinned Hawk
A record 46 individuals reported from 20 counties, including a CBC total of 32 individuals. Reports were mostly from the south, but included St. Louis, Marshall, Clay and Otter Tail in the north.

Cooper's Hawk
Probably a record 22 individuals reported from ten counties south, including a CBC total of 15 individuals. One overwintered in Winona CS. Most other reports from December and January, with only three additional February reports. One north report without details from Hubbard County deleted as possible Northern Goshawk.

Northern Goshawk
Scarce. Reported from only 11 counties north, and six counties south. South reports include the Afton, St. Paul, Hastings, Mankato, and Excelsior CBCs, plus 12/25 Anoka PKL and 1/14 Scott RJ. The five reported on St. Paul CBC seems too high.

Red-shouldered Hawk
Reports were up. About ten individuals reported from seven south counties.

Red-tailed Hawk
Unusually widespread during mild conditions. Reported from a record 45 counties from throughout the state, including the north and west where infrequently reported in winter. CBC total **536** individuals, probably a record number, with many counts tallying 40–50+ individuals.

Rough-legged Hawk
Reported from a record 43 counties throughout the state including western regions where infrequently reported in winter. Approximately 137 individuals were reported by seasonal contributors. An additional 249 birds were recorded on CBCs, although there may be some overlap with individuals on seasonal reports. Remarkable numbers were present in the open bog area of southern St. Louis Co. where **139** counted on the Sax/Zim CBC (this is the highest number ever reported in winter). Although 100+ were still present on 1/7, these birds were almost entirely gone by late January. West region reports were entirely from December. Overwintering noted in Carver and Winona, and probably Dakota and Goodhue. Many reports in late February where not reported in mid-winter, suggesting an early northbound movement.

Golden Eagle
Six reports. Two individuals reported overwintering in Wabasha and Winona where regular in winter. Reports away from usual southeast range continue and include 12/20 Becker *fide* BBe, 12/26 Renville PKL, 1/15–25 Roseau SDM, PS,

and 2/25 Kandiyohi *fide* RF. In the past ten years, this species has been reported from 32 counties in winter throughout the state.

American Kestrel
Reported from 39 counties as far north as the Duluth CBC and 12/16 Mahnomen BK. CBC total 105. Reports up slightly after a steady decline since 1987.

Merlin
Eight reports from seven counties, less than in the past five years. Overwintered in Otter Tail SDM. Also reported on the Duluth (3), Grand Forks, Crosby, and St. Paul CBCs, plus 1/8 Wilkin SDM (Richardson's race), 2/2 St. Louis *fide* KE, and 2/20 Rice TBo.

Prairie Falcon
One noted overwintering at grain elevators near the University of MN campus in Minneapolis, Hennepin Co. BF (***The Loon*** 67:114). Also reported on the Fargo/Moorhead CBC (although the four individuals reported seem unlikely and undoubtedly not all were in MN).

Peregrine Falcon
Birds from the reintroduction program reported as usual from the Twin Cities area in Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington (Bayport), and in Rochester, Olmsted Co. CK where overwintered.

Gray Partridge
Probably lowest number of reports ever. Since a population boom in 1991 (***The Loon*** 63:175), this species has steadily declined. Reported from only six counties with a statewide CBC total of only 15 (619 in 1991 and 1,105 in 1985). Although fluctation in numbers is normal for this species, it seems possible this species could be completely wiped out by a harsh winter.

Ring-necked Pheasant
Reported from 38 counties in the southern two-thirds of the state as far north as Clay, Becker and Pine. CBC total 790.

Spruce Grouse
Reported as usual from a number of locations in Lake mob. Also seen in December along the Echo Trail, St. Louis Co. SS, 1/16 Roseau (Hwy 310) SDM, and on the Beltrami Island CBC (10).

Ruffed Grouse
Relatively scarce. Reported from 22 counties in range. CBC total a below average 55 individuals.

Greater Prairie-Chicken
Only reports in Wilkin SDM, on the Crookston CBC, and 2/25 Clay CF.

Sharp-tailed Grouse
Numbers still greatly reduced. Only reports were from the Baudette CBC (1), 1/22 Aitkin WN (20), and 12/22 **Kanabec** PKL (1), the latter location outside normal range.

Wild Turkey
Reported from 13 counties mostly in the southeastern portion of state as far north as Isanti and as far west as Sibley. Reports on the Fargo/Moorhead, Wild River, St. Paul NE, Excelsior, Wabasha, Rochester, Faribault, and Winona CBCs totaled 398 individuals. Many of the reports north of Wabasha may be of introduced birds which are not permanently established.

Virginia Rail
State's seventh winter record was discovered when odd tracks were investigated in the snow at the Bass Ponds, Hennepin Co. 2/9–12 SC, JD.

American Coot
Overwintered in Hennepin, Scott, and Winona, plus additional reports mostly in December and early January from Ramsey, Dakota, Houston, Waseca, Kandiyohi, Otter Tail and **Beltrami** (Bemidji CBC).

Killdeer
Three reports of late migrants, all the latest dates on record: **12/2 Cook** DS (first

north report in winter), **12/9** Winona CS, and **12/10** Houston FL (2).

Common Snipe
Overwintered at Mound Springs Park, Hennepin Co. SC, JD. Other reports were from December: 12/3 Hennepin (Bass Ponds) SC, 12/10 Houston FL (2), and the St. Paul and Morris CBCs.

Bonaparte's Gull
One seen on **12/3** at Lake Calhoun, Hennepin Co. SC and three seen on **12/8** along Mississippi River, Ramsey Co. JD. Fourth and second latest dates on record, respectively.

Ring-billed Gull
A few late migrants noted in December and early Jaunary from nine counties south, plus one north report 12/6 St. Louis KE. In the Twin Cities area, up to three birds were reported at Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co., and the Mississippi River, Ramsey Co. through late January, but no February reports until 2/20 Dakota TT, which probably represents a returning migrant.

Herring Gull
Overwintered on Lake Superior in St. Louis, Lake and Cook counties. Late north migrants reported 12/3 Cass and Crow Wing PKL. December migrants noted in eight counties south, with many using the Mississippi River in St. Paul where 1,160 recorded on St. Paul CBC. Still 50+ on 1/2 Dakota TT. At least one bird lingered through late January at Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co., but there were no February reports.

Thayer's Gull
Only Lake Superior reports were in St. Louis where three reported on the Duluth CBC, and 2/7 St. Louis KB when two flew by Stoney Point with other gulls. Also reported in the Twin Cities area in Anoka, Hennepin, Ramsey, and Dakota counties (peak of three adult and four first-winter on **1/1** Ramsey and Dakota BF). Last seen on **1/5** Ramsey PBu.

ICELAND GULL
Two reports, both from Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co. An adult reported 12/10–18 PBu, BF, and a first-winter individual reported 12/17–26 PBu, BF (details provided for both).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL
For the third year in a row, an adult was present in the Twin Cities (***The Loon*** 67:63–64) where reported 12/2–3 at Lake Harriet, Hennepin Co. SC *et al.*, and 12/9 at Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co. BF.

Glaucous Gull
Only Lake Superior reports were on the Duluth CBC (3), 2/7 St. Louis KB when five seen flying by Stoney Point, and January in Cook KMH (number unknown). In the Twin Cities, reported until 12/9 at Lake Calhoun and Harriet, Hennepin Co. mob, and until 1/1 at Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co. mob, with a peak of three at Black Dog Lake on 12/31 BF.

Glaucous Gull, 21 December 1994, Duluth. Photo by Craig Menze.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL
A first-winter individual was reported from 12/9–1/8 in Duluth, St. Louis County PS, mob (***The Loon*** 67:117–118).

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE
One first-winter individual reported on **12/26** at Duluth, St. Louis County PS (this is the third winter record, not the second as erroneously stated in ***The Loon*** 67:110).

Rock Dove
Reported from 82 counties throughout the state. CBC total 12,750.

Mourning Dove
Reported from 36 counties throughout the state with overwintering noted as far north as Koochiching (fourth consecutive winter). Largest flocks reported were 100 on 12/18 Fillmore PKL, and 96 birds on 1/26 at Flandrau State Park, Brown Co. JSp. CBC total 1,162; probably a record number.

Eastern Screech-Owl
Reported from 12 counties with the only north report on the Fargo/Moorhead CBC. CBC total 29.

Great Horned Owl
Reported from 37 counties throughout the state. CBC total 106.

Snowy Owl
After last year's record invasion of 351 birds (***The Loon*** 66:160–65), only about 18 individuals reported, with the most southern in Cottonwood ED (2), on the Excelsior CBC, and 1/11 Dakota *fide* PBa.

Northern Hawk Owl
Only two reports: one seen in February near Duluth mob, and another seen on 12/17 near Cotton in southern St. Louis Co. *fide* KE.

Barred Owl
Reported from 20 counties in range plus unusual southwest report: 1/13 **Murray** ND, JP. CBC total 26.

Great Gray Owl
Only three reports: 12/2–24 St. Louis *fide* KE (four locations in Sax/Zim area), 12/15 Roseau PS (two individuals along Hwy 310), and 1/27 Beltrami SKS.

Long-eared Owl
Record number of reports (***The Loon*** 67:114–115). Approximately **49** individuals reported from 15 counties (only four of which were on CBCs), with peak counts of 16 seen on 1/10 Dakota AH, and eight birds seen in one willow tree 12/27 Hennepin DN. During the past ten years, there has been an average of less than three reports each winter, and usually only single birds are seen, so these reports are truly extraordinary. Nearly all reports were south with the only north reports on the Fargo/Moorhead CBC and 1/25 Cook KMH.

Short-eared Owl
Reports were up when compared to previous five years with individuals recorded 12/26 Olmsted CK *et al.*, 1/1–12 St. Louis AH *et al.*, 1/8–10 Dakota AB, AH, and 2/4 Cottonwood ED (2).

Boreal Owl
Only report 2/28 Cook SOL.

Northern Saw-whet Owl
Overwintered at Big Willow Park, Hennepin Co. where up to three birds seen, SC, mob. Also reported on the Excelsior, Rochester, and Winona (2) CBCs, plus 1/27 Scott KB, JD, and 2/17–26 Rice TB. There were six reports in the northeast region in St. Louis and Cook counties in February, including one calling by 2/21 St. Louis TW.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird
One bird reported until **12/7** Goodhue *fide* RJ when it died, becoming the latest date on record by a month.

CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD
First state record lingered at a feeder until **12/5** in Hennepin mob (***The Loon*** 67:5–8).

Belted Kingfisher
A total of 40 individuals were reported from 19 counties south. Although the number of overwintering individuals is unknown, reports were distributed throughout the period. There were also three north reports where unusual: two to three overwintered in Otter Tail SDM, and two other individuals were reported on the Bemidji and Grand Rapids CBCs. CBC total 32.

Red-headed Woodpecker
Reported from 11 counties south and east of Kanabec, plus 2/1 Murray ND in the southwest, Clay mob in the northwest, and 12/28 St. Louis ME/SK in the northeast. Largest number noted was 15 overwintering at Cedar Creek Natural History Area, Anoka Co. JH. CBC total 25.

Red-bellied Woodpecker
Reported from 37 counties as far north as Clay, Hubbard and Aitkin. CBC total 445.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Three to four reports, more than usual. One bird was present at a feeder from November to **1/30** in Bloomington, Hennepin Co. *fide* SC; a different bird was seen in Richfield, Hennepin Co. on the Bloomington CBC (details provided); another was seen 12/4–7 Washington WL, and possibly the same bird was seen on the St. Paul NE CBC.

Downy Woodpecker
Reported from 58 counties throughout the state. CBC total 1,812.

Hairy Woodpecker
Reported from 51 counties throughout the state. CBC total 891.

Three-toed Woodpecker
Four reports of about five individuals. Three were reported on 2/24 along the Spruce Road in Lake Co. DPV where one had been seen earlier on 2/4 PBa. Also reported on the Isabella CBC, and on 2/24 from within the Red Lake WMA, Beltrami Co. *fide* AH.

Black-backed Woodpecker
Approximately 13 individuals reported from 9 counties (about average) within the coniferous belt as far south as the Crosby CBC and 1/6–16 Carlton *fide* KE.

Northern Flicker
Reported from 17 counties south and only four counties north, where probably overwintered in Cook, St. Louis, and Clay, with an additional February report in Wilkin. CBC total only 21 individuals, one of the lowest totals in the past ten years.

Pileated Woodpecker
Reported from 42 counties throughout the state. CBC total 185.

Horned Lark
Reported from 40 counties throughout the state. January records came from as far north as Roseau and Marshall in the northwest, and two unusual reports in the northeast: 1/6 Duluth KE, and 1/13–2/3 Cook KMH. Over 1,000 were present by 1/25 in Martin PKL. CBC total an average 890.

Gray Jay
Reported from nine counties in north, all within the coniferous zone. CBC total 114.

Blue Jay
Reported from 80 counties throughout the state. CBC total 5,774.

Black-billed Magpie
Reported from 12 counties in range as far south as 12/7 Wilkin SDM and 1/21 Aitkin WN. CBC total 52.

American Crow
Reported from 80 counties throughout the state. CBC total an above average 14,123.

Common Raven
Reported from 17 counties in range as far south as Kanabec and Pine. Only south report 1/9 Chisago RG (2). CBC total 582.

Black-capped Chickadee
Reported from 63 counties throughout the state. CBC total 11,410.

Boreal Chickadee
Reported from Cook, Lake, St. Louis, Aitkin and Lake of the Woods in normal range, plus the Crosby CBC and 2/22 **Becker** BBe (Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge). CBC total 29.

Tufted Titmouse
Reported in Houston, Winona and Olmsted within permanent range, plus the Austin and St. Paul NE CBCs. CBC total 10.

Red-breasted Nuthatch
Numbers down. Reported from 30 counties mostly in northern and eastern regions, with no west central reports, only Lyon in the southwest, and only Brown in the south central. CBC total 705, with good numbers reported in northeast (counts ranged from 22-265 individuals), but scarce in the south and west (counts ranged from 1–12 individuals).

White-breasted Nuthatch
Reported from 55 counties throughout the state. CBC total 2,338.

Brown Creeper
Reported from 36 counties throughout the state. Most north reports were from December only, but reported throughout the period in Lake. CBC total 136, about average.

Carolina Wren
Only report from mid-December to end of period at a feeder in Northfield, Rice Co. MS (details provided).

Winter Wren
Only report through **12/24** at the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge, Hennepin Co. SC.

Marsh Wren
One **overwintered** at the Bass Ponds, Hennepin Co. SC, TT *et al.* (details provided). There are only two previous winter records, neither of which were reported overwintering.

Golden-crowned Kinglet
Reported from 16 counties throughout the state, but all reports except these three were in December: 1/21 Aitkin WN, 1/21 Lake DPV, and 2/25 Olmsted CK. This pattern of most reports in December and none or few overwintering seems to be typical for this species. CBC total 29.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Only report 12/9 Rice TBo (no details). This species is casual at best in winter.

Eastern Bluebird
Five reports all in the eastern regions: 12/1 Cook PKL (3), 12/8 Rice TBo, the Lacrosse CBC, **12/31** Kanabec CM (3), and late December to **1/7** Duluth mob (5). The latter two north records are unusual since there have been only three previous December reports in the north in the past ten years.

Townsend's Solitaire
Only five reports, all but one from North Shore of Lake Superior: from 1/7 through end of period at Lake of the Isles, Hennepin Co. JD, mob; from 1/28 through end of period on Park Point, Duluth SML *et al.*; 2/2–19 in Duluth (Lakeside) *fide* KE; on 12/15 in Grand Marais, Cook Co. KMH, and 2/15–16 at Lutsen Sea Villas, Cook Co. *fide* KE.

Hermit Thrush
Overwintered at the Bass Ponds, Hennepin Co. TT, RG. Another was reported on the St. Paul CBC.

American Robin
Reported from 32 counties throughout the state with overwintering noted as far north as Pennington, Koochiching, and Cook. CBC total 460.

Varied Thrush
Record invasion detailed elsewhere in this issue includes 29 individuals in 19 counties during the winter period alone.

This is about double of any prevous influx.

Gray Catbird
Two December reports: **12/3–11** Hennepin mob (Bass Ponds), and **12/15** Cook KMH (Grand Marais CBC).

Brown Thrasher
Five reports (above average): overwintered Kandiyohi RF, 12/6–9 Winona CS, 12/10 Cook SOL, through 2/1 Carver mob, and the Bloomington CBC.

Bohemian Waxwing
Reported from 13 counties north with numbers down in Duluth but high in a number of other northern towns, including flocks of 400–800+ in Aitkin and Crow Wing counties. Only south report on the Wild River CBC (4). CBC total a below average 1,939.

Cedar Waxwing
Reported from 24 counties in all regions of the state except the southwest. Numbers high in some areas with a peak of 745 on the Wild River CBC. CBC total of 3,115 is well above average.

Northern Shrike
Above average number of reports. As many as 226 individuals reported from 51 counties throughout the state. This includes about 125 individuals reported on seasonal reports from 47 counties (counties reported without number of birds specified treated as only one individual). CBC total of 101 individuals, the highest count in over ten years, and perhaps a record. This count may include some individuals already reported by seasonal contributors (but attempts were made to minimize duplication). Peak **24** on the Duluth CBC.

European Starling
Reported from 82 counties throughout the state. CBC total 23,678.

Yellow-rumped Warbler
Three reports: one seen on 12/12 in Faribault, Rice Co. FKS, TBo and then again on the Faribault CBC (details provided); another seen on the St. Paul CBC, and then again (probably same individual?) on 12/31 & 1/1 Ramsey JD, and another seen 2/8–12 Hennepin *fide* SC.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER
A record late individual was reported at a feeder in Rockford, Wright Co. from **12/7** until **12/10** when it died, and the specimen was retrieved (***The Loon*** 67:65–66). Thirteenth record for state, the latest date by two months, and the first winter record.

Common Yellowthroat
One reported on **12/5** at the Bass Ponds, Hennepin Co. RG, mob. Only the sixth December record.

Northern Cardinal
Reported from 37 counties in all regions of the state, although only northwest report was in Clay. Overwintered in northeast in Cook. CBC total 1969.

Rufous-sided Towhee
Only report 12/2 Lac qui Parle FE (no details). Future reports should include details in anticipation of future split (many winter records are apparently the spotted race).

American Tree Sparrow
Reported from 35 counties in southern two thirds of state plus Cook in far northeast. CBC total 3,179.

Chipping Sparrow
Two reports of this species even though accidental in winter: one seen until **12/9** Cook KMH (details provided), and another probably overwintered since reported **1/2–2/7** at Nicollet Island, Hennepin Co. JD *et al.* Approximately nine previous winter records, only two of which overwintered.

Lark Sparrow
Amazing winter record reported **12/18** Rice GB (***The Loon*** 67:67). First winter

record, and latest date by almost two months.

Fox Sparrow
Only reports on the Rochester CBC, 12/17–1/17 Houston EMF, and 1/15 Lake *fide* KE.

Song Sparrow
At least seven overwintered at the Bass Ponds and other locations along Long Meadow Lake, Hennepin Co. SC *et al.* Other reports included the Duluth, Long Prairie, Owatonna, and Hastings CBCs; 1/1 Nicollet MF, 2/1 Mower RRK, and 2/16 Lac qui Parle FE.

Swamp Sparrow
Overwintered at the Bass Ponds and other locations along Long Meadow Lake, Hennepin Co. where a minimum of 12 seen 12/18–24 SC *et al.* Also reported on Rochester and **Grand Forks CBC** (details provided), the latter north report very unusual.

White-throated Sparrow
Reported from 13 counties. Overwintered in Anoka, Kandiyohi, Hennepin, Winona, and Houston in south, plus Koochiching and probably Cook in north. Other reports were in December and early January.

White-crowned Sparrow
Two reports, neither with details: 12/12 Hennepin AH, and 1/2 Rice OR. Probably casual in winter.

Harris' Sparrow
Overwintered from late January through February in both Dakota TT and Winona GRJ counties (***The Loon*** 67:112–113). Also reported 12/1 Kandiyohi County RF, 12/15–1/14 Cottonwood ED, and 1/27 Scott JD.

Dark-eyed Junco
Reported from 50 counties throughout the state with overwintering noted as far north as Koochiching and Cook. Large numbers (140–150+) were reported on 12/18 in Fillmore and Houston PKL. CBC total 5,168.

Lapland Longspur
Reported from 16 counties in south and west. Aside from additional reports in December and February, January reports included: 1/7–8 Winona CS (100), 1/16 Mahnomen BBe (40), 1/21 Lake of the Woods (200) SKS (unsual number and location), 1/21 Dakota TT (20), and 1/22 Dodge BL (30–50). Returning migrants noted 2/27 Murray ND (1,000). CBC total a below average 60 individuals.

Snow Bunting
Widespread. Reported from 43 counties throughout the state with large numbers noted in northwest where 1,200 were counted in three flocks 1/15 Roseau PS, and 1,514 were counted on the Warren CBC. Most south reports were in December except 2/22 Murray ND (100) and additional counties with no date listed. Additional reports mostly in northcentral region in late February (2/22–25) indicated migrants were moving through the state at this time. CBC total 5,571.

Red-winged Blackbird
Reported from 19 counties as far north as Clay, Becker and Aitkin, with overwintering noted in Otter Tail (**60–70** individuals), Kandiyohi, and Dakota. The majority of other reports were in December and early January with only one additional mid-January report (1/13 Murray ND), and one additional February report (2/18–22 Hennepin mob). CBC total a below average 104.

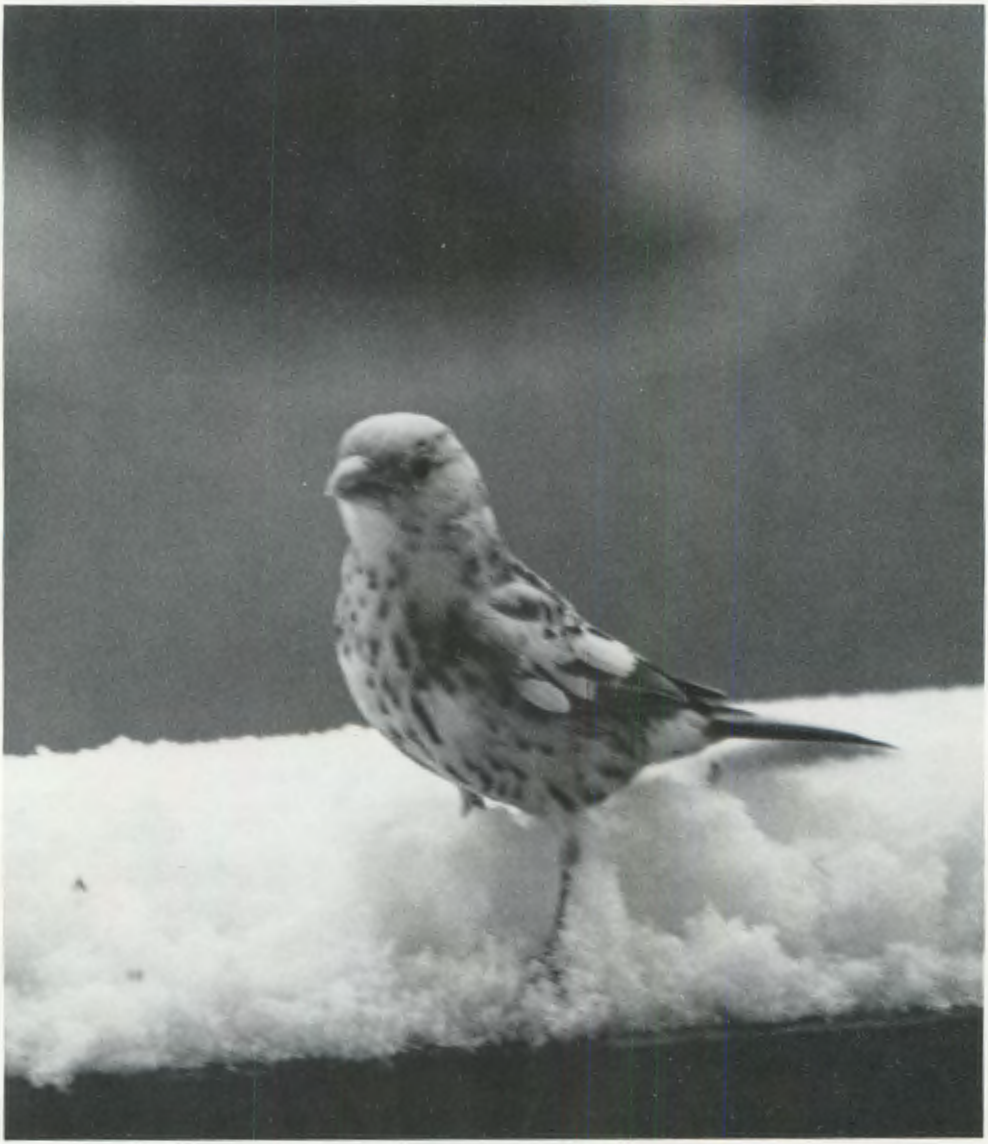
Meadowlark, sp.
Eight reports, more than average: 12/10 **Lake** PS (details provided); the Minneapolis North CBC, 12/25 Cottonwood ED, 1/14 Wilkin CF, 1/28 St. Louis *fide* KE, 2/12 Dakota TT, 2/15 Wilkin SDM, and 2/25 Wilkin DW.

Rusty Blackbird
Reported 12/7 Dakota RJ and 1/21 Dakota TT. All additional reports were on

CBCs, including Aurora, Detroit Lakes, Faribault, Marshall, Morris, St. Paul (21), and St. Paul NE (75), but the latter numbers are not credible without details.

Brewer's Blackbird
Only reports on the Long Prairie and Austin CBCs (neither with details). Although there are a few reports of this species each winter, only seldom are these documented.

Common Grackle
Reported from 27 counties throughout



Partial albino female House Finch, December 1994, Dakota County. Photo by David Cahlander.

the state. Individuals Overwintered in Cottonwood, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, and Winona counties. The majority of additional reports were in December and early January, but also reported in mid to late January in St. Louis, Faribault, and Freeborn; and reported in February in Cook, Hennepin, Mower, and Aitkin. CBC total 143.

Brown-headed Cowbird
Three reports, none with details: three birds overwintered in Kandiyohi County RF, and individuals were counted on the Mountain Lake and Albert Lea CBCs.

Northern Oriole
Only report until 12/5 in St. Paul, Ramsey Co. *fide* WL (no details).

Pine Grosbeak
Reported from 14 counties north, all within the coniferous belt except 12/3 Clay CF. Good numbers reported in northernmost counties. Three south reports on the Excelsior, Wild River, and Morris CBCs (none with details). CBC total a respectable 1,335.

Purple Finch
Reported from 36 counties throughout the state, but very scarce in south. A number of CBCs in the south reported considerably more Purple Finches than House Finches: these are probably mostly misidentified House Finches. CBC total an above average 601.

House Finch
Reported from 36 counties throughout the state. Exponential increase in numbers continues since 2000+ individuals counted on CBCs (only 835 two years ago), with many counts in excess of 200 individuals.

Red Crossbill
Reports up from past few years. Twelve reports of small numbers (flocks of 5–16) from six counties north: Otter Tail, Becker, Lake of the Woods, Beltrami, St. Louis, and Lake. Only south report in December in Olmsted mob. CBC total 122, highest number since 1984–85 invasion.

White-winged Crossbill
Approximately 18 reports of moderate numbers (flocks of 2–8) from eight counties north, all within the coniferous belt. Peak 184 on Duluth CBC and a total CBC count of 232. Most reports since 1989–90 invasion.

Common Redpoll
Very scarce. The lowest number reported since 1980. Reported from only ten counties north. Only three south reports, all on CBCs: Faribault, Bloomington, and St. Paul NE (all accurate?). CBC total a dismal 335.

Hoary Redpoll
Only one report during a generally non-redpoll winter: 12/31 Lake DPV (no details).

Pine Siskin
Reported from 36 counties throughout the state. Abundant in north where flocks of 100–200+ individuals often reported. Very scarce in south with most counties represented by only a single date or observation. CBC total 3,689 with a record 1,066 on the Duluth CBC.

American Goldfinch
Widespread. Reported from 49 counties throughout the state. Unusually common in north with large numbers (flocks of a dozen or more) noted at feeders as far north as the Canada border. Peak in north 1/6 Hubbard MW (135). CBC total 3,066.

Evening Grosbeak
Reported from 14 counties in north as far south as Kanabec. Generally scarce, but a record **951** of the 1,519 individuals on the CBCs were from Duluth. No south reports.

House Sparrow
Reported from 81 counties throughout the state. CBC total 21,236.

Contributors

PBa	Parker Backstrom
KB	Karl Bardon
TEB	Tom & Elizabeth Bell
BBe	Betsy Beneke
TLB	Tom & Lisa Bennett
DBe	David Benson
JB/TS	Janet Boe & Thom Soule
TBo	Tom Boevers
BBo	Brad Bolduan
AB	Al Bolduc
DBo	Don Bolduc
TBr	Terry Brashear
RB	Richard Brasket
DBr	Diane Brudelie
PBu	Paul Budde
SC	Steve Carlson
DC	Dave Cahlander
JD	Jeff Daines
JDa	Jeff Dankert
ND	Nelvina DeKam
ED	Ed Duerksen
KE	Kim Eckert
FE	Fred Eckhardt
ME/SK	Molly Evans & Sarah Kohlbry
BF	Bruce A. Fall
LF	Lawrence W. Filter
HJF	Herbert & Jeanette Fisher
TF	Troy Flicek
EMF	Eugene & Marilynn Ford
CF	Cole Foster
RF	Randy Frederickson
MF	Merrill J. Frydendall
JF	J. S. Futcher
RG	Ray Glassel
JG	Jan Green
MH	Mike Hendrickson
AH	Anthony Hertzel
KMH	Ken & Molly Hoffman
RH	Robert E. Holtz
HH	Harlan Hostager
JH	James L. Howitz
NJ	Nancy Jackson
RJ	Robert B. Janssen
PJ	Paul Jantscher
GRJ	Gretchen & Roger Johnson
DJo	Douglas P. Johnson
OJ	Oscar L. Johnson
BK	Byron Kinkade
RRK	Ron & Rose Kneeskern
CK	Chuck Krulas
HK	Henry C. Kyllingstad
PKL	Pat & Ken La Fond
SML	Steve and Mary Laufers
Fl	Fred Lesher
BL	Bill Litkey
WL	William H. Longley
SOL	Sandy & Orvis Lunke
GM	Grace Marquardt
DBM	Dennis & Barbara Martin
CM	Craig Menze
SDM	Steve & Diane Millard
DN	Dave Neitzel
BN	Bill Nelson
WN	Warren Nelson
RO	Robert O'Connor
JP	Johanna Pals
OR	Orwin A. Rustad
SS	Steven Schon
CS	Carol Schumacher
MS	Marlene M. Simon
DS	Drew Smith
JSp	Jack Sprenger
JSt	Jeff Stephenson
SKS	Shelley & Keith Steva
FKS	Forest & Kirsten Strnad
PS	Peder Svingen
TT	Tom Tustison
DPV	Dan & Pam Versaw
JW	Jesse Wallace
MW	Marlene Weber
SW	Steve Weston
KKW	Kristi & Kyle Wicklund
DW	Dennis Wiesenborn
TW	Terry Wiens
SW/MS	Steve Wilson & Mary Shedd
WW	Warren Woessner
DZ	Dave Zumeta
mob	many observers

BIRDING BY HINDSIGHT

A Second Look at Gulls

Kim R. Eckert

Gull identification. The very phrase itself strikes terror in the minds of many birders. Especially those dreaded immatures — immature gulls, that is, not birders. I know several skilled and knowledgeable birders who aren't afraid to identify a silent *Empidonax* or the most nondescript fall warbler, but when it comes to gulls they literally look the other way.

But if it's any consolation, this piece has no intention of discussing the intricacies of the more challenging gull identification problems: e.g., Herring vs. Thayer's vs. Iceland vs. Glaucous; or picking out an immature California or Lesser Black-backed in a flock of Herrings and Ring-billeds; or how to tell if that presumed Great Black-backed might actually be a first-state-record Slaty-backed or Western. Each of those would be separate articles in their own right.

Instead, what follows is an introduction to some of the things to look for — and look out for — when identifying gulls. There are certain features on gulls worth taking a second look at, features that when not taken into account could easily lead to misidentifications. Also included here are a few brief notes on identification problems involving some specific gulls.

Age. Probably the first step in identifying any species of gull is to simply be aware of its age and corresponding field marks. Some field marks might be diagnostic on a gull in full adult plumage, while attention to these same characters on an immature might lead to a misidentification. For example, you may know that a brown eye would be a good thing to look for when trying to find a Thayer's or California Gull, but you also need to be aware that some third-winter Herring Gulls (which resemble full adults) might also have brown eyes. Other illustrations of common misidentification problems — involving bill color and wing tip pattern — which result from observers not being aware of a gull's age are mentioned below.

Certainly, there is no room here for a discussion on how to age gulls; nor was there apparently any room in the Peterson or Robbins field guides to show gull plumages at all ages. If you rely on either of these guides when identifying gulls, you will not get very far. The Geographic field guide is a far better choice, and for even better information I highly recommend the second edition of Gulls: A Guide to Identification by Peter Grant.

Molt. Simply stated, gulls go from one plumage to another by molt: old feathers are lost and new ones grow in, generally in the fall and spring. But it is important to realize that the molting process may last for several weeks, so that a gull's plumage may appear atypical, even in disarray, and relatively difficult to figure

out for weeks at a time. Note as well that not all individuals of the same species begin or end their molts at the same time, and they may not progress at the same rate. Therefore, it is not unusual to see two individuals of the same species and same age sitting side-by-side and looking quite different. Also, as gulls molt, bill and eye and leg colors may be changing as well — but again not necessarily at the same rate.

Consider again, then, a Herring Gull in third-winter plumage as mentioned earlier. Not only could one have either a yellow or brown iris, but also its bill might have some black on it, or some red, or both colors. Its wing tips may show one white spot or "mirror" within its black wing tips, while another third-winter Herring might have two, and still another may show none. And while its tail may show a solid black tail band, on the other hand it might possibly have only a paler and broken one.

Other examples of gulls in molt being frequent sources of identification difficulties are mentioned below; these typically tend to involve confusing and atypical wing tip patterns.

Size and Shape. Certainly size differences between some gull species are important considerations in the identification process. Typical Glaucous Gulls look larger than Icelands, Thayer's also average larger than Icelands, Great Black-backeds should appear larger than any other "black-backed" gull, Herrings are normally larger than Californias and Lesser Black-backeds and most Thayer's — the examples are many. Unfortunately, relative size is far trickier to deal with than most birders realize.

For one thing, males of a given species are often noticeably larger than females. Therefore, it is entirely normal for a male Iceland to look as large as a female Thayer's, or for a male Thayer's to appear as large as a female Herring. More than once I have seen Great Black-backeds and Glaucous Gulls — presumably females — look essentially the same size overall as Herring Gulls. And when trying to judge a gull's size, by the way, it is often more useful to consider only parts of its body — e.g., bill size, neck thickness, wing span, etc. — rather than just its overall length or height.

Similarly, head shape is an equally elusive concept, with apparent differences often a function of the gull's sex rather than its species. So while those "larger" species tend to have flatter forehead profiles than their "smaller" and rounder-headed counterparts, a Thayer's Gull, for example, could either look like a flat-headed Herring or a round-headed Iceland.

There is also the relatively unknown but potentially serious problem of what has been termed size-illusion. You may not believe this until you try it, but if you have identically sized objects (or gulls) in view through optics (or a telephoto lens) at the same time, and one is a few feet farther away, it will appear larger — not smaller — than the closer one! This illusion is more evident at relatively close range and with higher magnifications. It may be difficult to explain, but size-illusion is a reality and it should therefore be obvious that size comparisons involving gulls or any other birds should only be made if the birds are side-by-side, and exactly the same distance away. (On a similar note, direct size comparisons should also only be made on birds exactly perpendicular to your line of sight: if at an angle, a gull's body and bill lengths are foreshortened, appearing smaller than they actually are.)

Eye Color. The identification of some gulls often relies on iris coloration, but here again there are some pitfalls to be aware of. First of all, a pale iris will look dark at a distance or in poor light, so when searching for dark-eyed species like Thayer's or California or even that second-state-record Mew Gull make sure you are close enough to accurately determine that the iris is dark. The easiest way to do this is to examine any adjacent gulls known to be yellow-eyed (e.g., adult Herring or Ring-billed): if you can see their yellow eyes, then you know

you really could see the dark eyes on that gull you're looking for.

The second step is to make sure that gull with the dark iris is in full adult plumage. As mentioned earlier, a third-winter Herring Gull, which generally resembles an adult, might have a dark eye. It would then be easy to assume it to be an adult gull and misidentify it as a Thayer's or California on the basis of iris color. I also suspect some fourth-winter gulls, which really are essentially in adult plumage, might still have a dark iris: two documented Great Black-backed Gull records of dark-eyed adults probably involved fourth-winter birds (see ***The Loon*** 64:12–15 and 65:50–51).

Bill Color. The pattern of colors on a gull's bill is another important feature to consider when identifying some species. As indicated earlier, however, bill color patterns change with age, and unless the observer is aware of a gull's age and the range of variation possible during that age misidentifications will result.

Consider the Herring Gull, for example. First-winter birds normally have an all-dark bill; second-winter birds typically have a two-toned bill with a pale base and black tip; as mentioned earlier, bills on third-winter Herrings are variable in pattern but often show a black ring near the tip; and fourth-winter/adult Herrings should have an all-yellow bill with a red spot near the tip of the lower mandible.

One problem, though, is that a first-winter Herring may already have acquired the two-toned bill associated with second-winter birds. An unwary observer could then easily mistake it for a first-winter California Gull based on the bill pattern, especially if that Herring Gull were a small female. Novice gull watchers unfamiliar with the bill patterns of sub-adults also have trouble with those third-winter Herrings with a ringed bill: these get misidentified all the time as Ring-billed Gulls when nothing other than bill pattern is considered. (By the way, it is entirely normal for other third-winter gulls — e.g., Iceland, Glaucous, Thayer's, California and Great Black-backed — to have ringed bills as well.) And fourth-winter Herrings often show both black and red spots on the lower mandible (i.e., traces of the black ring from third-winter still present along with the red spot of an adult), so that an identification based primarily on bill pattern could easily result in an erroneous report of an adult California Gull.

Gray Areas. To some birders, the entire issue of gull identification is just one big "gray area" we would be better off without, but that's not the point of this paragraph. Gray areas here mean the shades of gray (or black) on an adult gull's back and upper wing surfaces that often serve to separate one species from another. Mew and California Gulls are darker than Ring-billeds and Herrings, Great Black-backeds are darker than Lessers, Bonaparte's are slightly darker than Common Black-headed Gulls, etc. The problem is that shades of gray are highly dependent on light conditions and the angle at which the gull is from the observer. Judging gray and black shades in photographs is even trickier since the camera's exposure setting, the film type, the developing and printing process must all be taken into account. It is not unusual, then, to see an adult gull appearing darker than another adult of the same species, and it is risky to identify, say, a suspected California Gull among some Herrings and Ring-billeds based primarily on a darker back and wings.

Wear, Fading, Albinism, Hybridization. As difficult as it is just to identify gulls within their normal range of plumage variations, there will be times when faced with one of abnormal appearance. A gull's plumage, especially in spring and summer, can look quite bedraggled or worn after months of exposure to the elements; similarly, it may also appear unusually pale or faded. Such gulls must be identified with caution, with the main problem in Minnesota being faded immature Herring Gulls frequently mistaken for Thayer's.

Albino gulls, though rarely seen, do exist and would be another source of

confusion; obviously, it would not be hard to mistake one for a Glaucous or Iceland or perhaps even an Ivory Gull. A more likely possibility would be to encounter a hybrid gull — imagine the potential there for a misidentification.

More Gulls with an Identity Crisis. Some of the most frequent gull misidentification problems in Minnesota have already been pointed out:

- How a brown-eyed Herring Gull might easily be miscalled an adult Thayer's;
- A first-winter Herring Gull might have a two-toned bill and thus be mistaken for a first-winter California;
- Beginners frequently misidentify third-winter Herrings and other gulls with ringed bills as Ring-billeds;
- Many fourth-winter Herrings have both a black and red spot on the bill and could easily be misidentified as adult Californias;
- Some Thayer's Gull records turn out to be just sightings of faded immature Herrings.

Wouldn't it be nice now if readers could avoid such difficulties from now on? It would be even nicer if this list ended at five. Unfortunately, there are a few other gull identification problems that birders should especially be aware of:

- Perhaps the most common of all mistakes involving gulls occurs in late summer and early fall when adult Ring-billed and Herring gulls are in molt. At this time the black tips on their outer primaries are still growing in and are more difficult to see. Therefore, when viewed briefly, at a distance or at a difficult angle, these gulls are frequently and erroneously reported as Thayer's or Glaucous or Icelands.
- Franklin's Gulls are another frequent source of confusion, with first-summer and second-summer birds (i.e., one-year-olds and two-year olds) being mistaken all the time for adult Laughing Gulls. The problem is that such Franklin's Gulls may have nearly complete black hoods, but at the same time they may not have yet developed the white area between their black wing tips and the rest of the wing. It is easy to see how easy it is to miscall such birds adult Laughings.

A less frequent problem with Franklin's Gulls is similar to the one described above involving molting adult Herrings and Ring-billeds. Adult Franklin's in molt during spring and summer may show little or no black on the tips of their outer primaries; as a result their wing tips may appear white, and, combined with the white trailing edges of their wings, this creates a pattern quite similar to an adult Little Gull.

- Finally, the casual Black-legged Kittiwake has been involved in misidentifications with at least four species that I am aware of. First, second-winter Ring-billed Gulls, which mostly resemble full adults, typically lack any white mirrors in the black wing tips; a "dipped-in-ink" pattern is the result, and a beginner might then misidentify it as a kittiwake. Second, note that a Bonaparte's Gull in juvenile plumage, which is not illustrated in any field guide, has a distinct dusky smudge on its hindneck; therefore, it is easily mistaken for a first-winter kittiwake (whose hind-neck marking is darker).

The third and fourth kittiwake look-alikes don't occur often enough here to present that much of a problem. But note that a Sabine's Gull's wing pattern, while striking, is not quite as diagnostic as most would think, since a first-winter kittiwake also has similar black and white triangles on its wings (the difference is in the kittiwake's black bar on the gray upper wing coverts). And lastly, note that a first-winter Common Black-headed Gull is not the only small gull with a black-tipped yellow bill; the field guides fail to mention that first-summer kittiwakes have a similarly patterned bill.

Now that late fall is here, good gull watching times are upon us. Plenty of migrants are passing through and arriving for the winter, rarities often turn up now, and most species at this time of year tend to be in plumages less likely to be subject to molt and other complications. Just keep in mind that none of the field guides — Geographic included — have

all the answers, and it's always a good idea to base your identifications on a combination of field marks, not just one feature that might be variable enough to lead you astray. **8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.**

Associate Editor's note: This article is fourth in a series on the identification of selected Minnesota birds. During editing and typesetting, some errors have appeared in the previous three articles which may have caused some confusion on the part of readers.

The titles of the previous articles should have read: "Birding by Hindsight: A Second Look at Identification", "Birding by Hindsight: A Second Look at the Calendar", and "Birding by Hindsight: A Second Look at Shorebirds".

In the most recent article on shorebirds (***The Loon*** 67:100–103): the hyphen in "golden-plovers" was omitted; in the section on Solitary/Spotted Sandpipers, the first sentence should include the words "finely spotted upperparts" (not "under-parts").

Long-eared Owls Nest in Aitkin County

Warren Nelson

On 17 May 1995, I was out scouting the area along Aitkin County Road 18 in preparation for the M.O.U. spring meeting. I stopped to check a few old crow nests. They all seemed empty, but when I tapped on one of the trees, I was surprised to have a Long-eared Owl jump off and scream at me. To avoid possible nest abandonment, I left immediately. The nest could be safely viewed from the road through scopes without disturbing the owl. It was really a thrill to be able to share the owl with the many birders who attended the meeting.

And now ... for the rest of the story. On 17 June 1995, I returned to the nest and was overjoyed to find the female Long-eared sitting along with three down-covered young. I watched from the road through a scope for several minutes. My joy soon turned to total numbness. The female tried to jump off the nest, but she seemed to be stuck, hanging half off the edge of the nest. Through the scope, I could see she had her talons tangled in some twine that the crows must have used to line the nest with. She managed to get back into the nest, and again tried to fly off. This time, as she jumped, she pulled most of the twine with her — along with two of the young. Watching the two young fall 40 feet to the ground left me feeling absolutely sick. To my relief, the thick moss under the trees lessened their impact upon hitting the ground, and both of the young appeared no worse for wear — nothing broken.

In the meantime, the female somehow managed to free herself from the twine. Now, how to get the young back into the nest? Forty feet is a long way up and the tree was too thin to climb. The only way I figured I could do it was by ladder. I have two extension ladders I could lash together, which should get me up to the nest. I drove the 30 miles back home to get the first one and brought it back to the nest. Getting the second one was another story.

I had left it a mile out in the woods and through a swamp at a nest platform where I had Great Gray owls nesting the last two years. The walk out to get the second ladder wasn't much fun in 95 degree heat. The hike (or should I say

Young Long-eared Owl in hand-made nest, 15 June 1995, Aitkin County. Photo by Warren Nelson.

trudge) back was awful at best. Recent rain turned the swamp into Aitkin County's answer to the Grimpen Mire from "The Hound of the Baskervilles." With the ladder over my shoulder, I sunk with every step up to my knees and had my boots sucked off into the muck. I had to pull each boot back on at least 30 times. It took well over two hours to walk that one mile out to the car and I can honestly say that I have never been that tired and dizzy before.

After a long recuperation period, I was back at the Long-eared nest, where I lashed the two ladders together. Now it was so top-heavy and I was so tired, I couldn't lift it. So, 30 miles back to town to get help. I got a coworker to go up with me — for a price. But with two people, the ladders went up fairly easily and reached to within a couple feet of the nest. After securing the ladder to the tree, I climbed up and rid the nest of all the twine left in it, to make sure this couldn't happen again. I then went down, examined the owlets and finding no problems, put them in a small padded camera bag to carry them up. During this whole process, the parent birds would dive at me and scream. Several times, the female sat as close as five feet away, giving me a real piece of her mind. When I carefully lifted the young back into the nest, she quit screaming and flew to a perch about 20 feet away. After getting the ladder down and back on the car, a quick look found the female back on the nest with the young. It had taken over nine hours and 245 miles on the car, but I guess it was worth it.

Part two of this saga came the following weekend. On 24 June 1995, Bill Stauffer and I returned to County Road 18 and stopped at the nest. Things had become even worse. All three young had fallen from the nest — presumably from strong winds during the week. One of the young was dead. A second had a bad facial injury and the injury was infested with flies and maggots. The third one looked in good health and was very active. My initial thought was to put up an artificial nest since the crow nest wasn't working too well. But before doing anything, we drove back to Bill's cabin and called Debbie Eskedahl, veterinarian at the Garrison Animal Hospital. Her suggestions were as I thought — to bring the

injured owlet to her, and to put up a fake nest at a lower level.

Armed with chicken wire and nails, we again headed north. We were joined in our venture by Audrey Engels from Palisade. At the nest site, we decided the tree right next to the nest tree had the best limbs for a fake nest. I put the ladder up and started putting the wire platform in place about 16 feet up, while Bill collected sticks to line and complete the nest. The whole process took about an hour and a half. Again, I carefully placed the young in my camera bag, went up the ladder, and placed it gently into the new nest. We had brought along a small cardboard box to use to transport the injured owlet to Debbie. With one owlet in the nest and the other in the box, the three of us took off. Bill and I left Audrey at her house in Palisade and headed for Garrison. Debbie was kind enough to come in after hours to accommodate us. We're lucky to have her in our area. But she wasn't too encouraging about our owl. She said she would do what she could. Bill and I donated some money toward her costs, thanked her, and left. We would later find out that our owlet didn't make it, but at least we tried.

There is one bright spot to this story. On subsequent visits to the artificial nest, I found that the Long-eared family took to the nest readily, with the adult birds defending it. And on 5 July 1995, I found the one remaining young out flying on its own, looking good, doing well, and still being defended by the parent birds. I wouldn't want to do it all over again, but I probably would. It's a good feeling to know that all of our efforts saved at least one of the young.

603 – 2nd St. NW, Aitkin, MN 56431.

Avian Species Diversity and Utilization of an Urban Area

Robert Holtz

For their field study project in my Spring 1995 Ornithology course, five of my students chose to observe the birds in a small urban area. Their objectives were two-fold. First, they wanted to document the number of species and relative abundance of each species utilizing the area. Second, they wanted to determine which species appeared to be breeding in the area.

Four of the students had previously taken a Field Biology course which included an introduction to birding skills and bird identification. The fifth student had not taken the Field Biology course, but by virtue of his many years of interest in birding, he was the best birder in the group.

Methods

A 12-square-block area near Concordia College in St. Paul was chosen as the study site. This was done primarily because not every student had access to transportation. The site was kept relatively small in order that students would have time to make careful rather than rushed observations. As one student noted from a reading (Hunken 1992), a study area need not be extensive in order to provide suitable data. What is important are regular and accurate observations. One student read Buff (1993) to pick up clues from bird behavior as to whether breeding and nesting were occurring.

Each student was to make a minimum of one or two observations per week.

(Two of the students were not completely faithful on this point.) They recorded species seen, the number of birds seen, the location where they were seen, any breeding/nesting behavior, and the time of the observation. Some also recorded weather data.

All observers used Concordia's 8x36 Bushnell binoculars. In addition, most used Peterson's (1980) field guide if they were uncertain of a species' identity.

The study site was subdivided into five sections, one per student, because each student would seldom have a block of time long enough to do a complete 12-square-block survey. Three students surveyed two square blocks each, and two surveyed three square blocks each. These surveys began around mid-April and continued until 19 May.

The study site covered an area from Hamline Avenue three blocks east to Dunlap Street, and from Dayton Avenue four blocks south to Ashland Avenue. This is an older, established neighborhood with mature trees and a variety of shrubbery. In addition, the southwest corner includes a small park and the border of a railroad track.

Results

During the study, 35 species and over 1,590 individual birds (obviously with many individuals being counted several times) were observed (see Table 1). Several times, flocks or groups of birds were seen in shrubbery where it was impossible to get an accurate count. Those additional birds are indicated in Table 1 with a plus sign. Not surprisingly, House Sparrows were more common by nearly a two-to-one margin over the number two species, the Common Grackle. Also of interest is the fact that our most recent resident, the House Finch, was the sixth most commonly seen species.

The majority of species seen in April were very common birds such as Rock Dove, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, American Robin, European Starling, Northern Cardinal, Dark-eyed Junco, Common Grackle, House Finch, and House Sparrow.

Table 1

Species	Number of Individuals
*American Kestrel	13
Peregrine Falcon	2
Rock Dove	63
Mourning Dove	25
Chimney Swift	65+
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1
Downy Woodpecker	8
Northern Flicker	5
Least Flycatcher	3
Blue Jay	18
American Crow	131+
Black-capped Chickadee	38
Brown Creeper	1
House Wren	3
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	6
Swainson's Thrush	3
Hermit Thrush	1
*American Robin	159
Gray Catbird	3
Cedar Waxwing	5
*European Starling	113+
Yellow Warbler	3
Yellow-rumped Warbler	10
Palm Warbler	3
*Northern Cardinal	34
American Tree Sparrow	6
Chipping Sparrow	5
Vesper Sparrow	2
White-throated Sparrow	6
Dark-eyed Junco	10
Common Grackle	226+
*House Finch	92+
Purple Finch	1
American Goldfinch	2
*House Sparrow	524+

* indicates possible breeding species.
\+ indicates more were present, but could not be counted accurately.

The common May species were much the same, with the addition of Chimney Swifts.

Discussion

Only four of the 35 species observed are not, according to Hilton (1983), birds of an urban or forest habitat. Those are the American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, Vesper Sparrow, and Yellow Warbler. In

this case, the kestrel is often seen by the railroad tracks, and it is known to nest in urban areas. The peregrines have nested less than one-half mile away on the Ward's Tower for the last six years. The Vesper Sparrow would have to have been a migrant, although I do not recall ever seeing one in the area during the 33 years I have taught at Concordia. The Yellow Warbler was also obviously a migrant.

It can be seen that the best represented order is Passeriformes, suggesting that no other order has been able to utilize the urban habitat as well.

It was also noted that the American Kestrel, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Downy Woodpecker, Least Flycatcher, Swainson's Thrush, Brown Creeper, and House Wren were only seen in or near the small park. This may underscore the importance of urban parks, at least for a few species.

In April, courtship displays were observed among Northern Cardinals, House Sparrows, and House Finches (male feeding female). April nesting activity was seen among House Sparrows, American Robins, and European Starlings.

Birds frequently observed in pairs in April included American Kestrels, Rock Doves, Northern Cardinals, and Black-capped Chickadees. In addition, the pair of kestrels acted very territorial, never leaving a certain area, and flying back and forth and screeching when the student observer was near.

The possible breeding species are noted in Table 1; however, I suspect there are others the students missed, such as Mourning Dove, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, and Common Grackle, which are always present during the breeding season.

Further Study

Hopefully, future classes will be able to continue this study and watch for any changes in species utilization. In addition, it would be interesting to check if certain species primarily utilize certain trees and/or shrubs.

I would also encourage M.O.U. members living in an urban area to select a small area (at least six to eight square blocks) and conduct similar surveys. If they do, I would encourage them to share their data.

Literature Cited

Buff, Sheila, 1993. Birding for Beginners. NY: Lyons and Burford.

Hilton, Bill Jr. and Robert Askins, 1983. Birds of the Minneapolis-St. Paul Region.

Hunken, Jorie. 1992, Birdwatching for All Ages. CT: The Globe Pequot Press.

Peterson, Roger Tory, 1980. A Field Guide to the Birds of Eastern and Central North America. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

2997 N. Chatsworth, St. Paul MN 55113.

Proceedings of the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee

Kim R. Eckert, MORC Secretary

The following records were voted on by mail January – July 1995 and found to be acceptable:

Barrow's Goldeneye, 1–2 January 1995, South St. Paul, Ramsey County (***The Loon*** 67:61–62).

Lesser Black-backed Gull, 16–22 November 1994, Minneapolis, Hennepin County (***The Loon*** 67:63–64).

Lark Sparrow, 17–18 December 1994, near Faribault, Rice County (***The Loon*** 67:67).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 16–20 October 1994, Ely, St. Louis County.

Black-legged Kittiwake, 26 December 1994, Duluth, St. Louis County (***The Loon*** 67:110).

***Plegadis*, sp.**, 10–11 September 1994, Weaver, Wabasha County.

Pine Grosbeak, 3 July 1994, Red Lake W.M.A., Lake of the Woods County. (***The Loon*** 67:65).

Barrow's Goldeneye, 21–22 January 1995, Black Dog Lake, Dakota County.

Connecticut Warbler, 2 November 1994, Richfield, Hennepin County.

Iceland Gull (adult), 29 March 1995, Red Wing, Goodhue County (***The Loon*** 67:184–185).

Great Black-backed Gull, 27 March 1995, Duluth, St. Louis County (***The Loon*** 67:111–112).

Iceland Gull, 7 April 1995, Pine Bend, Dakota County.

Iceland Gull (first-winter), 25 March–2 April 1995, Red Wing, Goodhue County (***The Loon*** 67:116–117).

Lesser Black-backed Gull, 9–28 April 1995, Oak Grove Township, Anoka County (***The Loon*** 67:177–178).

Great Black-backed Gull, 27 March 1995, Pigs Eye Lake, Ramsey County (***The Loon*** 67:181–182).

White-eyed Vireo, 5 June 1995, Whitewater W.M.A., Winona County (***The Loon*** 67:175).

Laughing Gull, 15 June 1995, Cameron Lake, Polk County (***The Loon*** 67:173–175).

White-eyed Vireo, 29 May 1995, Bloomington, Hennepin County (***The Loon*** 67:178–179).

Plegadis*, sp.**, 23 July 1994, Thielke Lake, Big Stone County (The Loon*** 67:123–129).

Black-headed Grosbeak, 17 May 1995, Moorhead, Clay County (***The Loon*** 67:182).

Lesser Black-backed Gull, 17 April 1995, near Etter, Goodhue County (***The Loon*** 67:183).

The following records were voted on by mail January–July 1995 and found to be Unacceptable:

Chestnut-collared Longspur, 25 October 1994, Agassiz N.W.R., Marshall Co. The entire description of the bird only includes references to a buffy head, lightly streaked back and breast, a "very obscure" eye mark, a "great deal of white on the tail," and "the colored tail feathers were the shape of a triangle." However, such a description does not preclude Smith's or McCown's Longspur; for that matter, there is no indication the bird was even a longspur, since the incomplete documentation does not preclude Vesper Sparrow, American Pipit, or juvenile Horned Lark.

Gyrfalcon, 16 January 1995, Nereson Township, Roseau County. The Committee unanimously agreed that this identification by a very experienced observer was probably correct; however, the majority also felt the documentation of this perched raptor seen only at a range of 500–700 yards is not detailed enough for acceptance. No useful plumage details were visible at the distance involved, the description does not indicate why the bird was a falcon and does not preclude the possibility of Northern Goshawk.

White-eyed Vireo, 13 May 1995, Lebanon Hills Regional Park, Dakota County. The entire description of this vireo only includes mention of a whitish belly, yellowish cast on the sides, and obvious light-colored wing-bars. However, such a brief description does not preclude a Solitary or Bell's vireo.

Common Black-headed Gull, 5 May 1995, Thief River Falls, Pennington County. While the description of the black-tipped yellow bill suggests that this immature gull was correctly identified, such a bill pattern also fits a second-year Black-legged Kittiwake. The observer also describes and sketches an underwing pattern that does not fit Common Black-headed or, for that matter, any other gull: black wing linings and outer primaries contrasting with white secondaries and inner primaries. The gull is also described as being "halfway between juvenile and first winter," a most unlikely plumage to be seen in May. **8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth MN 55804.**

A Possible Hybrid Blackpoll Warbler in Western Minnesota

Revisiting the "Carbonated Warbler"

Anthony Hertzel and Paul Hertzel

In mid-May of 1991, we found a warbler we could not identify, in spite of prolonged viewing in good lighting with binoculars and a field guide in hand. The problem was not insufficient information to make an identification, but rather that there is no recognized species marked in the way our bird was marked.

We were in the morning hours of a spring Big Day, walking the auto tour road of Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge in Lac Qui Parle County, when we encountered a small warbler wave. We worked together through the birds, calling out identifications, and confirming each other's sighting. Most were of the genus *Dendroica*, but one warbler could not be classified any further.

This bird, high in the budding deciduous branches, showed an entirely yellow underside. It had black streaking along its flanks, which, together with the bright yellow underneath, initially caused us to suspect Prairie Warbler. However, its most peculiar feature was its sharp black cap. We studied the bird through binoculars as it picked among the branches, but we could not confirm its identity. In fact, with only our experience to draw on, we ran out of ideas, and temporarily abandoned our attempt at identification in favor of finding what other birds were in the same group.

We walked under the trees, pointing out birds to each other, and periodically rediscovering the strange warbler. Finally we decided to devote a few minutes to a systematic analysis of its markings.

From the car we retrieved a field guide, a pen, and a notepad. We thumbed through the field guide, taking notes and comparing the species depicted there with our warbler, which was still close by and clearly visible. We eliminated all North American warbler species one by one, male and female, until there were no more. None had this bird's peculiar combination of very yellow underside, black streaking along the flanks, clean black cap, two whitish wingbars, black mustache, dark upperparts and yellow cheek.

The following North American warblers have yellow undersides and distinct dark streaking along the flanks: Blackburnian Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Prairie Warbler, and Kirtland's Warbler. With argument, the following could also be included in this group: Townsend's Warbler, Canada Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Grace's Warbler, Pine Warbler, and Palm Warbler. However, each of these species has some difference impossible to reconcile with our bird. Most noteworthy was this bird's conspicuous black cap extending down to the eye, characteristic of a male Blackpoll Warbler. In fact, except for the bright yellow undersides and cheek, this bird seemed to be a Blackpoll Warbler (*Dendroica striata).* We eventually abandoned our efforts, suspecting the bird to be a hybrid, probably Blackpoll X unknown.

We casually talked about the bird for a year or so. Then, perhaps two years after we saw the bird, we picked up a copy of Peterson's *Birds Over America* (1948) and read his piece, "The Fugitive Warblers." Here is an excerpt:

"Turning the elephantine pages of Audubon's fabulous Birds of America to Plate 60, we find two small yellowish birds. Their black caps and streaked sides

Figure 1. A comparison of the unusual warbler found at Big Stone N.W.R., Lac Qui Parle County and Audubon's "Carbonated Warbler."

give them a puzzling, unfamiliar look. The round full script at the bottom of the page informs us they are 'carbonated warblers'."

We examined the appropriate elephantine page and found a bird remarkably similar, though not identical to the bird we had seen two years earlier. Peterson consulted Audubon's account of these birds to learn they had been collected by Audubon in 1811 near Henderson, Kentucky. However, nobody has since confirmed a "Carbonated Warbler." Peterson speculates:

"Was it a creation of Audubon's vivid imagination or did such a bird actually exist in North America more than 100 years ago? Or could it have been a chance hybrid between a Blackpoll and a Cape May Warbler perhaps? The bird does not have the appearance of a fabrication; it looks very convincing less obscure than those other *Aves ignotae*, the Blue Mountain and Small-headed Warblers, which were figured by the great bird artist. However, the A.O.U. Checklist Committee has shelved it in the hypothetical or doubtful list of American birds, with the remark that '...as a large number of his drawings of birds obtained about this time were later destroyed, it is possible that the published plate might have been based to some extent upon memory.' Perhaps, but I prefer to keep an open mind about it."

Depicted in Figure 1 are side-by-side comparisons of Audubon's painting of his Carbonated Warbler, and a drawing reproducing what we saw on that day in May. Table 1 lists the important similarities and differences between the two birds.

We cannot say we saw a Carbonated Warbler, because no one knows what a Carbonated Warbler really is. For now, the A.O.U. Checklist Committee is content to call it a painting in a book. However, Peterson's speculation that Audubon's strange artwork concerns hybrids which were actually collected and responsibly depicted is sensible, especially given Audubon's reputation. The problem is a lack of known hybrids to support the idea. We believe we have seen one such hybrid in western Minnesota.

At present, confirmed Blackpoll Warbler hybrids are unknown. This does not mean, however, that possible Blackpoll hybrids have never been reported. Cockrum (1952) published a listing of all presumably natural hybrid birds reported in North America. This was the first such compilation since an earlier attempt by Suchetet in 1897 (in Cockrum 1952). Cockrum's list included about ten warbler hybrids besides the common hybrid Golden-wingedXBlue-winged Warbler, but many of these are unconfirmed or not accepted by later researchers. Only three of these reports involved Blackpoll Warbler. Brewster reported a BlackpollX Cape May Warbler in 1881, and in 1896 Suchetet listed another. The third Blackpoll hybrid mentioned was a BlackpollX Bay-breasted Warbler reported by Brodkorb in 1934.

Although this exhausts the record prior to 1952, an equally interesting report in Cockrum's list is that of a CarbonatedX Cape May Warbler announced by Coues in 1927. Cockrum chose to list this bird along with the BlackpollXCape May hybrids of the previous century. He also listed there a Carbonated Warbler mentioned by Ridgway in 1902. The sentiment, echoed by Peterson, is to place the Carbonated Warbler in among Blackpoll hybrids.

A second, more recent compilation of warbler hybrids appears in a paper by Bledsoe (1988) which is restricted to only confirmed hybridizations. Thus, he omits most of Cockrum's reports as well as a report by Gray (1958 in Curson *et al.* 1994) of a BlackpollXCape May. The only Blackpoll hybrid which Bledsoe lists is Blackpoll (or possibly Cape May) X Northern Waterthrush. Note, however, that here it is the *Blackpoll* parent that is uncertain, and Parkes (in Bledsoe 1988) argues in favor of Cape May Warbler.

This seems to leave us with no clearly established records of Blackpoll Warbler hybridization. Nevertheless, as noted

Feature	Our Bird	Blackpoll	Carbonated Warbler
Cap	black	black	black
Cheek	yellow	white	yellow
Eyestripe	none	none	yellow
Mustache	present	absent	absent
Throat	yellow	white	yellow
Flanks	dark streaking	no streaking	dark streaking
Ventral Side	yellow	white	yellow
Wings	dark	dark	dark
Wingbars	two	two	two
Dorsal Side	grayish	black	grayish
Legs	pale	pale	pale
Rump	olive-gray	black	yellow

Table 1. Similarities and differences between the bird at Big Stone N.W.R., Blackpoll Warbler, and Audubon's Carbonated Warbler.

above, there have been occasional sightings of warblers with plumage combinations such as black cap and yellow underparts suggestive of a hybrid Blackpoll. The Cape May Warbler is the species most often conjectured to hybridize with the Blackpoll. Brodkorb (in Cockrum) believed he identified a Bay-breastedX Blackpoll Warbler, and Short and Robbins (in Bledsoe) conjectured that a Blackpoll hybridized with a Northern Waterthrush. The latter is not in the same genus, *Dendroica*, as is the Blackpoll Warbler, and, except for Blue-wingedXGolden-winged hybrids, records of intergeneric warbler hybrids actually outnumber intrageneric hybrids. Curson *et al.* echos Parkes (1978) in suggesting that closely related species from the same genus seem to have evolved generally stronger mechanisms for reproductive isolation as compared to more distantly related species. Bledsoe, however, considers it more likely that our classification scheme is suspect.

With regards to our bird, it seems probable that one parent was a Blackpoll Warbler. The other parent may have been any warbler species capable of contributing yellow cheeks and solid yellow undersides. This list contains perhaps six or seven species. However, the specific habitat requirements for nesting Blackpoll Warbler may lend further clues as to the identity of the other parent. Blackpoll Warblers nest on or very near the ground, primarily in the spruce forests and bogs of northern Canada. Bent (1953) also mentions Blackpolls nesting beyond the tree limit in dense alder thickets. There are only three warbler species that also nest within this range, have the apparently necessary yellow plumage, and share with the Blackpoll the same habitat requirements. These are Yellow Warbler *(Dendroica petechia)*, Wilson's Warbler *(Wilsonia pusilla)*, and Cape May Warbler *(Dendroica tigrina)*, though Cape May would not contribute yellow cheeks to a hybrid.

Wilson's Warbler nests on or near the ground in boggy areas with trees of cedar, tamarack, spruce or balsam. Mossy, dense sphagnum bogs containing black spruce, tamarack or pine trees are also used. In its western range, it seems more confined to alder or willow thickets. Like the Blackpoll, Wilson's Warbler also breeds to the tree line. Yellow Warbler nests near the ground, and prefers open, damp alder and willow thickets near marshes. This species also breeds to the tree line of northern Canada. Cape May breeds mainly in drier, open forests of black spruce to the tree line. These forests often contain birch, balsam or hemlock. The nest can be located on the ground or as high as 60 feet up in a spruce or fir tree.

In the context of theories suggested by Parkes (1978) and repeated by Curson *et*

al. (1994) suggesting that closely related species from the same genus are less likely to hybridize, it is interesting to note that of these three, only Wilson's Warbler is not of the same genus as Blackpoll.

References

Bent, A.C. 1953. Life histories of north american wood warblers.

Bledsoe, A.H. 1988. A hybrid *Oporonis philadelphia* X *Geothlypis trichas*, with comments on the taxonomic interpretation and evolutionary significance of intergeneric hybridization. The Wilson Bulletin 100:1–7.

Cockrum, E.L. 1952. A checklist and bibliography of hybrid birds in North America north of Mexico. The Wilson Bulletin 64:140.

Curson, Jon, David Quinn, and David Beadle. 1994. Warblers of the Americas.

Peterson, Roger T. 1948. Birds over America.

National geographic field guide to the birds of North America, 1987.

8461 Pleasant View Drive, Mounds View MN 55112; Rt. 1 Box 118, Martin TN 38237.

BOOK REVIEWS

A PHOTOGRAPHIC GUIDE TO NORTH AMERICAN RAPTORS, by Brian K. Wheeler and William S. Clark. Academic Press, 1995, 208 pp. hardcover, $29.95.

The recent publication of several books on raptor identification has done much to educate, entertain, and bolster the confidence of thousands of hawk-watchers across the country. There is no substitute for hundreds of hours of field experience, but we can all use books to augment our identification skills. This book is the culmination of countless hours of field work by the authors. Good photos of raptors are difficult to obtain; many variables interact to determine picture quality. What may be "good enough" for a slide show is not necessarily a book-quality photograph. For nearly every photo that made the grade for publication, many were rejected. A few pictures are poor to fair, but were used because they were all that was available. Most are good to excellent; a few are stunning. Even the less notable portraits are much better than many of the photos in the authors' *A Field Guide to Hawks of North America* (due for revision in a year or so).

About three-fourths of the photos were taken by Brian Wheeler, over 20 percent by Bill Clark, and the remainder by various photographers. Peruse the book at leisure and you will soon be picking your favorites from an extensive gallery. The delicacy and grace of the White-tailed Kite, the striking deep orange of the California Red-shouldered Hawk, the incredible beauty of the adult White-tailed Hawk... all these and many more are here.

Think you're good at raptor identification? Compare the juvenile Zone-tailed Hawk, adult Harlan's Hawk, and adult male Rough-legged Hawk, all strikingly similar. What fun, the challenges of hawk ID!

The layout is straightforward. Each

species account begins with general descriptions of adults and immatures and, where applicable, color morphs and geographic variants. Following each descriptive account is a section entitled, "Similar Species," which is very useful for comparative purposes. Range and measurements are also listed. The photos are generously sized and never more than five per page, allowing for good detail. Following the regularly occurring species is an up-to-date section on all raptor vagrants that have occurred in North America. The end of the book contains a section entitled, "Raptor Identification Problems," containing 14 separate illustrated problem areas. One example: "pale primary panels on backlighted underwings of flying buteos." This portion of the book could well be the most helpful of all for hawk-watchers of moderate experience. Veterans could learn from it as well.

All species of regular North American occurrence are separated by sex, age, color morph, and geographic race, as necessary. With many species, there are no variants or oddly-plumaged morphs to learn, only immatures and adults. The real fun begins with the buteos, several of which have light, dark, and/or intermediate color morphs. Of the 167 pages devoted to the various families, over 40 percent are taken up by buteos. The two most variable species, Red-tailed and Swainson's Hawks, are covered by 46 and 24 photos, respectively. Coverage of the large western buteos is extensive and will be very helpful to birders nationwide, but especially to those in the west and Midwest.

I found numerous errors, mostly minor, of extra words, omitted words, muddled and sometimes confusing text, incorrect names, improperly credited photos, etc. These mistakes detract somewhat from the overall professional quality of this work, especially when the name of the publisher is Academic Press.

Here at last are all the diurnal North American raptors and their many variations depicted in a single volume. For serious birders and raptorphiles, this work fills a large gap. At six and one-half by nine and three-quarter inches, it is somewhat larger than a field guide, but still small enough to carry conveniently in your car or stuff in a pack. Especially when birding away from familiar areas, I recommend taking this book. It's enjoyable to look at, but also and most importantly, a practical field tool. Used in conjunction with the Hawks guide, and with diligent observation and careful note-taking, you should be able to correctly identify most raptors.

(Of note to Minnesota birders: 13 photos were taken at Hawk Ridge, including most of the Northern Goshawk pictures.) **Steve Millard, 630 W. Laurel, Fergus Falls, MN 56537.**

WILD ABOUT BIRDS, THE DNR BIRD FEEDING GUIDE by Carrol Henderson, Minnesota's Bookstore, 1995, 278 pp, 427 color photos, spiral bound, $19.95.

Carrol Henderson has written an excellent guide to bird feeding. Whether you are a beginner or an "old pro" at feeding birds, this guide will have something for you.

Mr. Henderson describes 69 species which come to Midwestern feeders as Canadian Boreal Migrants, Permanent Residents, Short-distance Migrants, Central American Migrants and South American Migrants, with colored photographs of both male and female plumages to aid in identification. Each written description also includes nesting information, arrival and departure dates, feeding habits and preferred food for each species.

Subsequent chapters show population trends, unusual visitors at feeders (pine martins, fishers, flying squirrels, etc.), raptors that come to feeders and problem animals (bears, raccoons, skunks, etc.) There is also a good discussion on the different types of bird food (seeds, peanuts, corn) as well as fruit and kitchen food (bananas, bakery goods, dog food and sugar water).

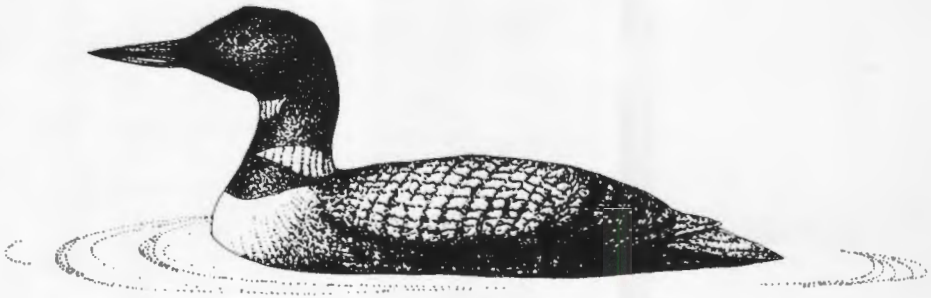
Mr. Henderson also shows woodshop basics for building bird feeders, as well as 26 detailed bird feeder designs. Fifty-

five kinds of bird feeders are described showing what birds they attract. He also shows you how to select, arrange, protect and clean bird feeders.

We have had bird feeders up in our various yards for many years. At last count, our current yard contains 16 feeders in winter time. One of us even worked part-time in a bird seed store for several years, and we were still able to learn many tricks to make bird feeding more pleasurable from this well written book. The author gives tips from experience on how to solve many basic problems that bird feeders attract, such as bees around hummingbird or oriole feeders, plus squirrels, deer, etc.

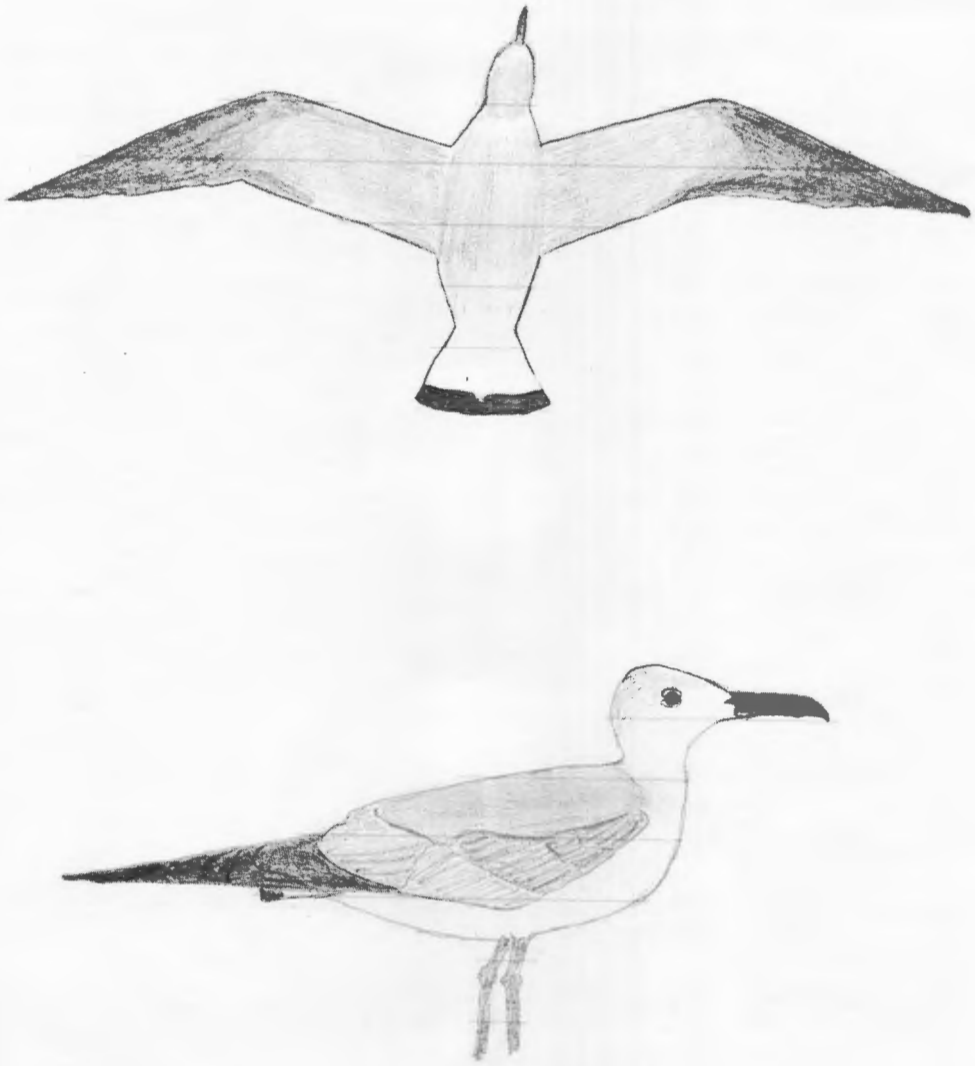
We also clearly remember the early days of feeding birds when we had problems identifying those species which were similar to each other. Was it a Downy or a Hairy, a Purple Finch or a House Finch, a female oriole or a female tanager, etc.? Oh, those frustrating days of birding in a vacuum, like most beginning birders! This book will be of great value to beginners because of the excellent photos. Little things like a Downy and a Hairy Woodpecker on the same feeder, side-by-side, or Purple and House Finches in similar poses, with information on how to tell them apart, are clearly a step up from the traditional field guides.

Backyard birders in the eastern Dakotas, Wisconsin, Michigan and other northern areas will find this book enjoyable and very helpful, but primarily this is a book for us in Minnesota. We feel this is the most comprehensive book available for backyard birders. It is a book not to be missed by Minnesota birders, whether you have bird feeders or not. **Barbara and Dennis Martin, 20185 Excelsior Blvd., Shorewood, MN 55331.**



NOTES OF INTEREST

LAUGHING GULL IN POLK COUNTY — On 15 June 1995, after eating a late lunch in Erskine, Polk County, I walked down to the edge of Cameron Lake. On the east edge of the lake is a swimming area surrounded on three sides by a grassy berm. I noticed several gulls standing on the grass, one looking very different from the rest, and I thought almost immediately Laughing Gull when the bird took flight. I called to Ralph Hanson that we had better get our binoculars and scopes. We returned to the Rydell Refuge Headquarters, picked up our scopes and binoculars, and returned to the lake with Steve Stucker 30 minutes after the initial sighting. We found the gull about 100 yards out in the lake among a



Laughing Gull, 15 June 1995, Cameron Lake, Polk County. Sketch by Steven Stucker.

number of Ring-billed Gulls. Within a minute or so, the gulls took off and headed for us, landing on the grass not 30 feet away, affording an excellent view on this very clear but windy day. My notes taken shortly after the sighting are as follows: obvious gull, slightly smaller than nearby Ring-billed Gulls, less bulky in the body. The bill was all black and large in proportion to the head, larger than the Ring-billeds. Forehead was white, top of the head grayish-brown, hindneck grayish-brown also, but lighter than the top of head. The head appeared more flat than rounded and there were faint eye crescents. The eye itself was dark. The breast, belly, and under-tail were white. The wings when folded showed brownish-gray secondaries, blackish-gray primaries with no white spots, and the wings extended beyond the tail. The upper portion of the tail was white with a wide black terminal band that extended to the tip of the tail. The legs were dark. In flight, the under sides of the wings were grayish with no pattern noted. The wings in flight were relatively long and pointed, and this individual appeared as large as the nearby flying Ring-billed Gulls. This is the first Polk County record for a Laughing Gull and only the second record for northwestern Minnesota. **Robert B. Janssen, 10521 S. Cedar Lake Road #212, Minnetonka, MN 55305.**

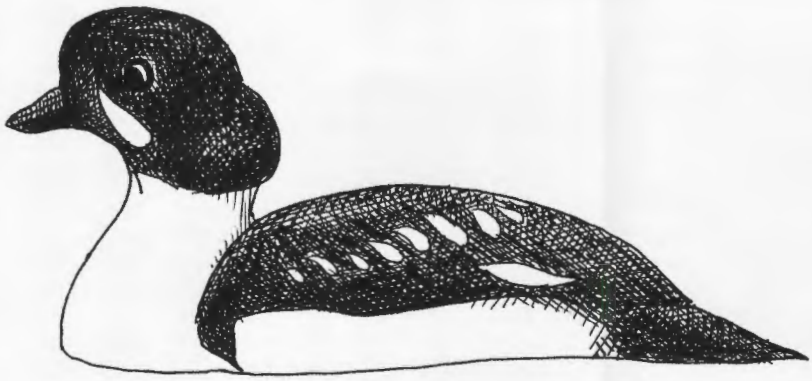
WHITE-EYED VIREO AT WHITEWATER W.M.A. — While visiting the Whitewater Wildlife Management area in Winona County on 5 June 1995, I stopped along Minnesota Highway 74, a mile north of Elba to investigate the gobbling of a Wild Turkey. Unfortunately, the turkey stopped calling after I pulled to the side of the road, and after a minute or two of listening, I gave up and was about to drive away. Just then, it occurred to me that among the birds I was hearing from the roadside vegetation was a White-eyed Vireo, a species I had become familiar with during the eight years I lived in Texas. The song was a quick series of burry chips that sounded to me like "gig-a-jer-gwig." I walked toward the call, past the roadside trees into a heavily overgrown field, and found the bird in a bush about 30 feet in front of me. It was olive-green above with two white wing-bars, yellow spectacles, and white eyes. The bird was white below, but had a strong wash of yellow on the flanks. Although the bird skulked nearly out of sight at first, it finally sang in the open for a full minute in bright sunlight. **Robert O'Connor, 1353 – 4th St. N., Fargo, ND 58102.**

LITTLE GULL AT MINNEAPOLIS — Shortly before 7:00 A.M. on 10 May 1995, I saw an adult Little Gull at Lake Calhoun in Minneapolis. From the east shore, I was looking west-southwest toward Thomas Beach with my spotting scope, scanning the waterfowl on the lake (a Surf Scoter was among the species present), when a Bonaparte's Gull appeared in my field of view. With binoculars, I saw that it was accompanied by at least two more gulls. I put the scope on the gulls as they continued flying in a northerly direction about 20 feet over the lake, and I was surprised to see that one of the gulls, while also black-headed, was quite different from the others. This gull had blackish under-wings with a white trailing edge. The upper surface of the wings was a plain, pale gray with no black on the tips. Its wings lacked the white wedges in the primaries, clearly visible in the wings of the two Bonaparte's beside it. The gull was noticeably smaller than the Bonaparte's. Lighting conditions on this overcast morning were good and, with both species in view simultaneously, I had no difficulty making the above comparisons. As the birds continued flying over the lake, the Little Gull split off from the others and began to circle higher and higher. I could follow it easily in the scope, but soon I was

seeing only a small gull without any distinguishable field marks. Finally, it quit circling and started flying north again in a direct line. The total time of the observation was only about five minutes. This is the 11th species of gull observed at Lakes Calhoun and Harriet in recent years. As rare as the Little Gull is in Minnesota (especially away from Lake Superior), it is interesting that this is the second May in a row that the species has been seen in Hennepin County. On 15 May 1994, an adult spent several hours at a flooded field in the far northern part of the county. **Steve Carlson, 3904 Xenwood Ave. S., St. Louis Park, MN 55416.**

SUMMER TANAGER AT FARIBAULT, RICE COUNTY — On Wednesday, 10 May 1995, at about 7:15 A.M., we saw a strange red-colored bird at our feeding station. It was sitting on a rod which holds the feeder. It was outside the south window of our kitchen, about five feet from the window and about ten feet from where we were sitting at the table. We looked in Birds of America by Robbins, Brunn, and Zim, and also Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds, and decided it was a Summer Tanager. We called Forest Strnad and he came up immediately to see if he could see the bird. It was gone by the time he got here. He asked us to notify him if it returned. It did return about 3:00 P.M. and we called him and he immediately came up again. The bird had disappeared. We tried to call him about 5:00 P.M., but his phone was busy. Forest called about 7:00 P.M. and we told him the bird had been in our yard for about 45 minutes in the afternoon. Forest came up again about 7:00 A.M. on Thursday, and he saw the bird in the sunlight on the ground below the feeder on the south side of the house. It flew from there, so he went around the north side of the house and saw the tanager on a different feeder. It flew to the ground and was eating there along with a Rufous-sided Towhee. The bird was a deep red, with a light-colored bill; the wings had a brown cast. It did not have a crest, so it was not a Northern Cardinal. The bird did not have black wings, so it was not a Scarlet Tanager, and it did not have wing-bars. **George and Gloria Cloutier, 2120 Hiersche Road, Faribault, MN 55021.**

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE IN RAMSEY COUNTY — On Christmas morning, 1994, I decided to go birding for a while, and so I drove to the Mississippi River in Ramsey County to look for gulls and waterfowl. As I walked up the dike just off Hardman Avenue in south St. Paul, I could see many goldeneye on the river below. As I scanned these birds through my spotting scope, one sleeping goldeneye caught my attention. Though I could not initially see its head since it was tucked away while the bird slept, other field marks made the identification of this bird as a male Barrow's Goldeneye fairly straightforward. The back and wings were very dark, and this extended down the shoulder in a deep curve, nearly reaching the water line. At the scapulars were several evenly spaced white marks in a row from the shoulder to approximately the center of the back. These marks, shaped like small white commas, were quite unlike the more irregular, slanted striping found on Common Goldeneyes. These field marks alone were sufficient enough to identify the bird as a Barrow's Goldeneye, but I stayed around until the bird awoke and began to actively swim about. Its head was obviously larger in proportion to its body than the nearby Commons. It was blunted at the forehead and flattened at the back, and was colored a glossy purple. There was a large, white crescent mark near the bill, very typical of Barrow's Goldeneye. This crescent extended from below the bill to well above. Though winter Common Goldeneye can also show a small crescent here, they are invariably smaller and less distinct. The eyes



12/25/94

♂ BARROW'S GOLDENEYE
MISSISSIPPI RIVER
ST. PAUL

were light yellow. This bird was seen for several days, on and off, by numerous birders. It then disappeared for some weeks. In late January, what was most likely the same bird appeared on Black Dog Lake, Dakota County. The last date it was seen that I know of was 29 January when I watched it fly down to Black Dog Lake late in the evening. **Anthony Hertzel, 8461 Pleasant View Dr., Mounds View, MN 55112.**

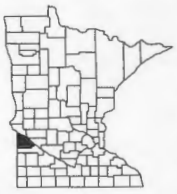
LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULLS IN ANOKA COUNTY — During April 1995, three different Lesser Black-backed Gulls were recorded within the large concentration of gulls in Oak Grove Township, Anoka County. Although no two individuals were seen together, they could be aged and confidently separated from each other based on differences mostly in the pattern of apical and subapical white marks in the primary feathers. The first individual was a third-summer bird seen on 9 April only. The mantle color was very dark, nearly as black as the primary extension, which appeared a very dark charcoal blackish. There were no white apical spots visible in the primary extension when perched, and there were no subapical white spots (white mirrors) visible in the outer primaries in flight. The second bird was a full adult seen from 17–20 April. The mantle color was a charcoal gray, slightly paler than what I recall on the third-year bird seen on 9 April. The folded primary extension was black, distinctly darker than the mantle, with five round, white apical spots, one at the tip of each primary. One large subapical white

spot was present on the leading primary, as visible on the underside of the opposite wing when the bird was perched, and conspicuous on the dorsal side in flight. This individual was seen repeatedly, often as close as 100 feet. Lastly, a third-summer individual clearly different than the third-summer bird I had seen on 9 April, was found on 19 April and last seen on 28 April. The wingtips were blackish, with three very tiny whitish spots visible in the folded primary extension, one at the tip of each of the three posterior most primaries. There was a subapical white spot on the leading primary seen on the opposite wing when perched, but this was smaller than the one seen on the adult, and was not visible on the dorsal side of the wing in flight. The mantle and scapulars were an even, charcoal gray, noticeably paler than the black primary extension. The coverts and tertials contrasted slightly with the mantle and scapulars because of their more brown, worn appearance. The bill was yellow with a black subterminal ring, formed by a black smudge on both the upper and lower mandibles. There was a red spot on the lower mandible adjacent to the black smudge. The eye was pale yellow and the legs were bright yellow. The eye and leg color of the other two individuals was bright yellow, with the red orbital ring clearly seen on the adult individual. On all three birds, the head, body and tail were all immaculate; even the two individuals aged as third-summer showed no sign of tail banding or streaking on the head and body. In all cases, these Lesser Black-backed Gulls were observed with large concentrations of Ring-billed Gulls and a few Herring Gulls feeding and loafing in agricultural fields. The charcoal gray mantle was clearly much darker than any of the Herring and Ring-billed Gulls on each individual, making them conspicuous among the pale-backed gulls. The structure on all three birds was small and slim, with the familiar long-winged, small-billed, small-bodied look of Lesser Black-backed Gull. The primary projection beyond the tail was at least that of the bill length on all birds, slightly more on the adult bird. They all appeared noticeably smaller than the average Herring Gull, often seeming only slightly larger than the numerous adjacent Ring-billed Gulls. **Karl Bardon, 1430 – 100th Avenue NW #212, Coon Rapids, MN 55433.**

PURPLE MARTINS CONTINUE TO USE SIREN COMPLEX FOR NESTING — In 1994, I reported nesting of Purple Martins in a siren complex in Lake City, Wabasha County (***The Loon*** 66:215). On 20 June 1995, I traveled to Lake City to check this year's status. I found the emergency siren complex more popular with martins than ever. Three pairs were nesting in the siren cones — one adult pair feeding, one subadult pair busily building, and another subadult pair incubating (one adult was carrying in green leaves). In addition to these breeding pairs, up to three subadult bachelor males were also present. The complex has also attracted House Sparrows. Two nests of these birds were seen in the sirens. **Russell B. Hofstead, 1118 – 6th Ave. S., South St. Paul, MN 55075.**

WHITE-EYED VIREO IN HENNEPIN COUNTY — On the morning of 29 May 1995, my wife Teri and I were walking along the main path west of the parking lot at the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge in southern Hennepin County. At the second wooden walkway, I heard a White-eyed Vireo singing from a tangle just off the path. The song, repeated frequently, with some variation, was a fairly rapid, throaty "whip-whip-purrrt-du-chitty-whip," with the emphasis on the first and last syllables. Having spent a couple of hours listening to a White-eyed Vireo at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge headquarters two weeks earlier, I recognized the song immediately. For several minutes, the vireo remained hidden in

the brush, but eventually we were able to watch it sing from a perch about 12 feet above the path, some 20 feet away. As we described what we were seeing, I jotted down these brief notes: "small size; dark, vireo bill; dark legs; white eye; yellow forehead; gray around head and back of neck; olive back; darker wings; two white wing-bars; yellow sides; white throat; white belly." The vireo was still singing when we left the area, about 15 minutes after we first heard it. The location of this sighting is two to three miles south and west of the refuge headquarters mentioned above. Both sites are on the north side of the Minnesota River Valley. **Steve Carlson, 3904 Xenwood Ave. S., St. Louis Park, MN 55416.**

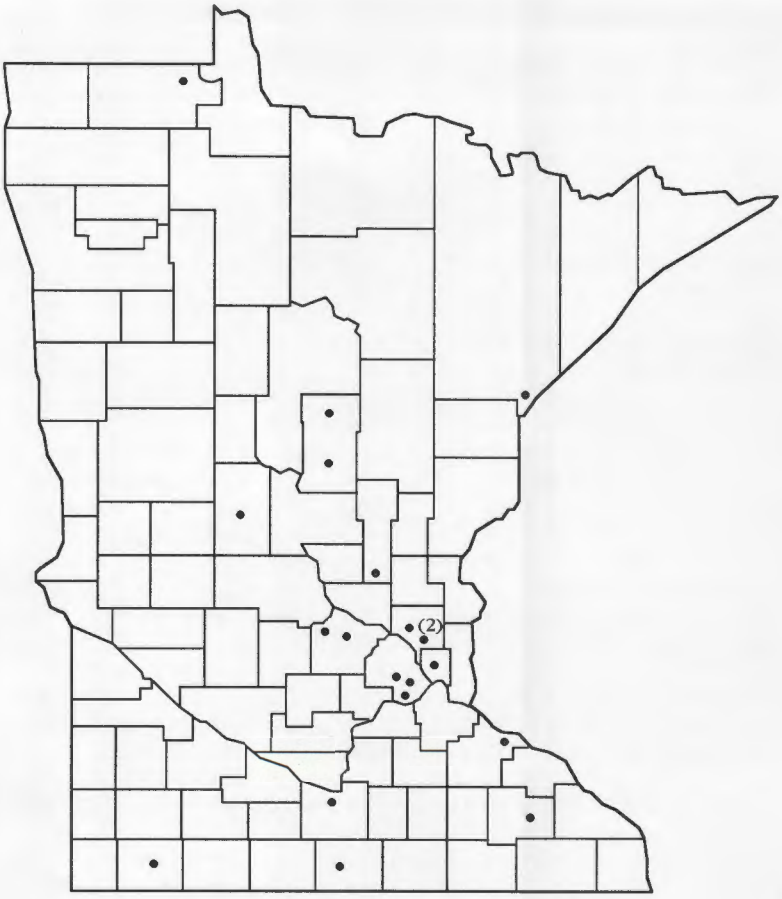
HYBRID CINNAMONXBLUE-WINGED TEAL OBSERVATION FROM LAC QUI PARLE COUNTY — 
On Saturday, 22 April 1995, while leading an Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis group attending the annual Salt Lake Weekend in Lac Qui Parle County, I identified a hybrid teal. At first glance, this teal appeared to be a typical adult male Cinnamon Teal. Its head, breast, and flanks were the uniform rich cinnamon color you normally expect to see displayed by this species; however, as it turned its head to preen along its flanks, I could see a white crescent on the side of the face in front of the eye. A long second look was made before announcing its presence to the rest of the group. I was not certain that the white was not an artifact of the bright sunny conditions, or a result of reflection off the shallow water the bird was standing in. This teal was studied by both of our vans for a few minutes before it took flight, along with the rest of the teal in the puddle. It did return after a few minutes, and we were able to view it again for a short time before it took flight once more, never to return. We were never able to get a scope on the bird, so I am not sure what the eye color was. But in all other respects, the bird was a male Cinnamon Teal with the white crescent of a male Blue-winged Teal. I found this interesting, as all of the hybrid CinnamonXBlue-winged Teal I have observed (in California and Colorado) have had some of the characteristics of Blue-winged Teal exhibited elsewhere in their plumage as well. Most birds would show some variation of a brown-spotted breast or flanks, a darker head or neck, more the color of a Blue-winged Teal. This is just one of the interesting things about hybrids — the variation between individual hybrids is infinite. In fact, hybrids can show characteristics of either parent species, as well as characteristics found in neither! A few hybrid CinnamonXBlue-winged Teal have been documented from Minnesota, most recently in Aitkin County (***The Loon*** 63:197–198). With a number of eastern and western species reaching the periphery of their range in Minnesota, we can expect hybrids of all types to continue to be seen within our borders. **Kim W. Risen, 5756 Brunswick Ave. N., Crystal, MN 55429.**

FIRST RECORD OF YELLOW-THROATED VIREO IN COOK COUNTY — 
At approximately 8:00 A.M. on 7 June 1995, while watering the garden, we became conscious of a distant bird singing that reminded us at first of a Scarlet Tanager. We had been having a tanager singing regularly around the yard and this bird had the same burry quality to its voice. As it came closer, the quality of the voice was still like a Scarlet Tanager, but the song was not right. The pattern of the song was more like a Solitary Vireo, which we had also been hearing. Instead of a Scarlet Tanager with the wrong song, we now had a Solitary Vireo with a sore throat. The bird was now at the edge of our clearing and as we went for the binoculars, we considered it might be a Yellow-throated Vireo, a bird never before recorded in Cook County. The tall black ash trees around our clearing

had just started to leaf out, so the bird was easily found as it sang and moved about feeding. The bright yellow throat and yellow spectacles immediately identified it as a Yellow-throated Vireo. It stayed around our clearing for about five minutes and we got good looks from as close as 50 feet, as it came down to feed in a mountain ash tree. Also noted on the bird were the prominent white wing-bars, greenish back, whitish belly, and the vireo bill. Its movements were much like our resident Red-eyed Vireo or Solitary Vireo. **Ken and Molly Hoffman, HC 86, Box 199, Grand Marais, MN 55604.**

AN INFLUX OF WESTERN TANAGERS — During the first three weeks of May 1995, Western Tanagers invaded Minnesota. During that period, there were reports of 20 individual birds from 14 widely separated counties in the state (see map for location of these records). Prior to 1995, there had been 35 documented records of the casual Western Tanager in Minnesota. More than half of the 1995 records were reported first between 8 May and 12 May. With one exception, all of the birds were adult males. The only female reported was one accompanying a male at a feeder in Coon Rapids, Anoka County. Unfortunately, only seven of the May 1995 records were documented by written details (Olmsted, Blue Earth, Todd, Mille Lacs, Crow Wing, Wright, and Faribault counties) or photos (Olmsted and Wright counties). The other records were from feeders of casual observers who did not take notes on the observed birds. However, the male Western Tanager is a very easy bird to identify even for a very casual observer; thus, most, if not all, of the documented reports are probably correct. It will be interesting to see if neighboring states experienced the same type of invasion. **Robert B. Janssen, 10521 S. Cedar Lake Road, #212, Minnetonka, MN 55305.**

Western Tanager, 9 May 1995, Olmsted County. Photo by Jeff Stephenson.



Western Tanager records, May 1995.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL IN RAMSEY COUNTY — While watching Herring and Ring-billed Gulls leave a roost at Pigs Eye Lake on the morning of 27 March 1995, I observed a very large, black-backed gull among them. Although it was viewed at long range across the water (approximately 1/2 mile), it appeared distinctly larger than even the Herring Gulls. When the gull took flight and was watched ascending to leave the lake, it flew side by side with a Herring Gull, and was distinctly longer in wingspan (I recall it being about 10–15% larger). This bird dwarfed the Ring-billed Gulls and an American Crow which also flew near it. On the water, the mantle appeared jet black, as black as the wingtips, which had an uncounted number of white apical spots. The head and body were very white, contrasting conspicuously with the black mantle. Although the bird initially began to leave the lake northward with the other gulls, it was seen to turn back, and come swooping back down. As it banked, the sun caught the color on the mantle, which appeared slightly paler than the wingtips. The primaries had several (one or two) white subapical mirrors, but unfortunately determining the exact pattern

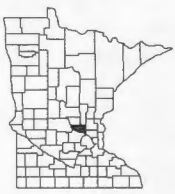
of these marks was impossible at this distance. The black on the primaries merged into the slate color on the rest of the wing without the white marks running in along the primaries (separating the black wingtip from the paler mantle) diagnostic of Slaty-backed Gull. Once back on the water, the mantle again appeared jet black, and the larger than Herring Gull size was again confirmed. Because of the distance involved, details of eye color, bill color and size, and exact wingtip pattern could not be determined. But despite this lack of other details, size alone eliminates all other black-backed gulls in North America, including Lesser Black-backed, Western, Yellow-footed, and Slaty-backed Gulls, none of which overlap with Great Black-backed Gull in measurements. **Karl Bardon, 1430 – 100th Avenue NW #212, Coon Rapids, MN 55433.**

AN EARLY NESTING EASTERN SCREECH-OWL — Roberts in *The Birds of Minnesota* (1932) lists the nesting season of the Eastern Screech-Owl as the period from March to June. He noted a brood of fledglings near Faribault, Rice County, in late March, and a nest in Polk County on 20 April with five well-incubated eggs. Bent in the *Life Histories of North American Birds of Prey, Part 2* (1938) listed a first egg date as 27 March (no location given). On 10 March 1995, I received a call from Sue Kratsch, who lives on Summit Circle in West St. Paul, Dakota County. She stated that two young screech-owls were being seen in the entrance hole of a Wood Duck box in her yard. Being somewhat skeptical that there would be young birds this early in the season, I went to her yard on 11 March 1995 and, at dusk, I saw two downy young Eastern Screech-Owls at the entrance hole, just as Sue had stated. An adult Eastern Screech-Owl flew by the box and perched nearby. I estimated the age of the two young owls to be approximately ten days, putting hatching time at or around 1 March. Incubation period for the Eastern Screech-Owl is listed at approximately 26 days. Thus, the first egg was probably laid on or about 1 February. The Twin City area experienced very mild temperatures with daytime highs in the 30s during late January and early February 1995. This may have induced this pair of screech-owls to nest very early, approximately 30–40 days earlier than normal. **Robert B. Janssen, 10521 S. Cedar Lake Road, #212, Minnetonka, MN 55305.**

BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK AT MOORHEAD — When notified by Spencer Meeks that he had a Black-headed Grosbeak at his feeding station in Moorhead, Clay County, on 17 May 1995, my son Benjamin and I went to see it. We mainly intended to add this bird to our Minnesota list and were not concerned about documenting it as an unusual species for the state, so we did not take notes. What we saw was a brightly-colored, fresh-feathered, large finch with a thick, stubby, grayish bill. The black head and black wings and tail spotted with white contrasted with the dark orange of the rest of the body. I especially remember the orange and black stripes on the back, a color combination I don't recall seeing on most grosbeaks in Montana, where I lived for decades. This bird also had a narrow orangish line running from behind the eyes, meeting at the back of the head. We viewed this bird from indoors for ten minutes and did not hear it calling or singing. There was no evidence of interbreeding with the Rose-breasted Grosbeak, something we saw later in the spring in another grosbeak on the Fargo side of the Red River. **Gary E. Nielsen, 237 Forest Ave., Fargo, ND 58102.**
Editor's Note: The above individual was also seen and well-described by Robert O'Connor of Fargo. The bird was not seen after 17 May.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL IN GOODHUE COUNTY — While scanning through the large congregation of gulls along the flooded Vermilion River in the northern part of Prairie Island on 17 April 1995, I noticed an adult Lesser Black-backed Gull among them. It was around 10:00 A.M. and cloudy, with no direct sunlight. The bird was observed standing and preening for half an hour at a distance of 80–100 yards through a 40X spotting scope. Early in that time period, a Bald Eagle came by and flushed all the gulls, but they eventually returned to the same loafing area. A little while later, another Bald Eagle came by and again the gulls were flushed. But this time, about a third of the gulls, including the Lesser Black-backed, headed in a northward direction out of sight. I checked the area again that afternoon, but to no avail. This gull, while standing taller among the Ring-billeds, was larger in body and head, but was not as large as the Herring Gulls and Thayer's Gulls in the vicinity. The head, neck, underparts, and tail were white. The mantle, scapulars, and wing coverts were blackish-gray with a white trailing edge of the secondaries showing between them and the black primaries, which had some small white spotting. The wingtips extended well beyond the tip of the tail. The yellow beak was thicker and longer than the Ring-billed Gulls' and had a red spot on the lower mandible toward the tip. The iris was yellow, but the color of the legs could not be determined because of the many Ring-billed Gulls and Bonaparte's Gulls standing in front of it. I have had three prior observations of Lesser Black-backeds, including an adult, as well as numerous observations of Greater Black-backeds in various plumages. **Bill Litkey, 589 Granite Ave. N., Oakdale, MN 55128.**

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE AT ELK RIVER — A subadult male Barrow's Goldeneye was sighted with a large roost of up to 1,000 Common Goldeneyes along the Mississippi River at Elk River, Sherburne County, on 24–25 February and again on 10–11 March 1994. My attention was drawn to this individual because of the indistinct, crescent-shaped mark on the face between the eye and the bill. Closer study as the bird swam along with a number of Common Goldeneyes showed that the head shape was more square, with the angle of the forehead rising up from the base of the bill in a vertical line, unlike the more rounded forehead and triangular-shaped head of the Common Goldeneyes. This difference in head shape was obvious throughout the observations and in all positions. The square head shape was further accentuated by the bird's small bill, which appeared smaller than the bills of the adjacent adult and immature male Common Goldeneyes. The head was a dark brown color similar to immature male Common Goldeneyes, but noticeably darker than adult female Common Goldeneyes. The head color lacked any of the purple or green gloss of adult male goldeneyes. The dusky, crescent shaped mark emerging on the lores was longer and extended higher above the base of the bill than the otherwise similar roundish spot on the lores of the immature male Common Goldeneyes. Many of the immature male Common Goldeneyes showed crescent-shaped marks on the face rather than the typical round ones, but these marks did not extend as high on the face as the Barrow's. Because the difference in the loral mark on the Barrow's Goldeneye was so subtle, head shape remained the most reliable and consistent means for locating this individual from the hundreds of other goldeneyes. I noticed that most of the immature male Common Goldeneyes showed more white on the flanks and in the scapulars and secondaries than the Barrow's Goldeneye. The Barrow's flanks were mostly grayish, becoming darker brown on the back, with three small whitish marks on the scapulars, and one white mark on the secondaries. This plumage was similar to the female Common Goldeneyes, except

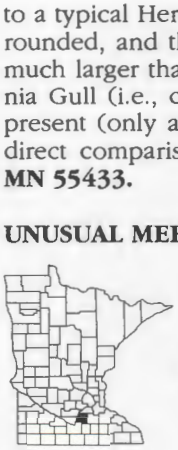


that the Barrow's breast was entirely white, contrasting noticeably with its gray flanks and dark head. The immature male Barrow's appeared to be in a delayed state of molt compared to the immature male Common Goldeneyes. Although the Barrow's Goldeneye usually mixed in with the Common Goldeneyes without incident, it was seen to aggressively chase Common Goldeneyes on several occasions. I have been studying Common Goldeneyes wintering on the upper Mississippi River in the Twin Cities for the past five years. Despite this intensive observation, this is the first Barrow's Goldeneye I have seen in the state (I have had previous experience with this species in Alaska). Although Barrow's Goldeneyes were virtually regular in the 1960s and 70s in Minnesota, especially in the Twin Cities area at Black Dog Lake and along the Mississippi River in St. Paul, this is the first Barrow's Goldeneye record in four years. This is the longest period of time the state has gone without a Barrow's Goldeneye record since 1965. The most recent observations were made in 1990 when the species was recorded at Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge, Sherburne County (***The Loon*** 62:165), seen wintering in Fergus Falls, Otter Tail County (***The Loon*** 62:96–99), and found just south of the Twin Cities in Vermilion Township, Dakota County (***The Loon*** 63:72–73). There are several previous Barrow's Goldeneye records at Elk River, including an adult male shot on 8 December 1976 (***The Loon*** 49:184), and another seen on 4 February 1984 (***The Loon*** 56:149). **Karl Bardon, 1430 100th Avenue NW #212, Coon Rapids, MN 55433.**

ADULT ICELAND GULL AT RED WING, GOODHUE COUNTY — On 29 March 1995 while watching the first-year Iceland Gull found by Bruce Fall at Colville Park in Red Wing, Goodhue County, (***The Loon*** 67:116–117), I observed an adult Iceland Gull in basic plumage. The head, body, and tail were all white except for a mild amount of light gray head streaking. The mantle was an even gray color, similar to the numerous Ring-billed Gulls surrounding it. The dorsal surface of the folded primaries was a medium to pale gray color, changing from almost as pale as the mantle to several shades darker, depending on the angle at which the bird was viewed. It was difficult to tell what the true wingtip color was, although it was never black and always appeared noticeably paler than all the Ring-billed Gulls present for direct comparison. The gray color in the folded wingtip was darkest at the bottom of the folded primary extension (i.e., on the leading edge of each feather), becoming very pale toward the top of the folded primaries (i.e., on the trailing edge of the feathers). There were four large white spots in the folded primary extension, one at the tip of each primary, and by the fifth primary counting inward along the wing, the surrounding gray color of the feather was so pale that the white spot began to merge with the rest of the feather, creating a very white appearance. These white apical spots were larger than those on Herring Gulls, similar in size to those shown by whiter-winged Thayer's Gulls. Each white spot was large enough to extend the entire width of the folded primary extension, rather than being entirely enclosed by black as on a Herring Gull. There was a partial ghost gray pattern of the dorsal primary pattern visible on the ventral surface, but this was substantially different from the thin, blackish trailing edge to the outer primaries shown by adult Thayer's Gulls, and in flight this gull looked virtually snow white on the underwing. The bill was a dull yellow with a pale red spot at the gonys, and the iris was a pale yellow, as pale in tone or shade as the Ring-billed Gulls adjacent to it, but not as bright yellow in color. The iris was not flecked with dark spots, but had a mild cloudy appearance to it. The leg color was not seen since the bird was sitting on the water. In structure, this bird was long-necked, small-headed, large-chested, and long-winged. The primary extension was at least that of the bill length. The bill was short compared

to a typical Herring Gull, with no substantial swelling at the gonys. The head was well rounded, and the expression was quite pigeon-like. In overall size, this bird was not much larger than the adjacent Ring-billed Gulls, appearing about the size of a California Gull (i.e., clearly smaller than most Herring Gulls). Very few Herring Gulls were present (only about half a dozen among over 5,000 Ring-billed Gulls), and none for direct comparison. **Karl Bardon, 1430 – 100th Avenue NW #212, Coon Rapids, MN 55433.**

UNUSUAL MERGANSER NESTING — A Hooded Merganser hen may have displayed an unusual site selection this spring in southeastern Le Sueur County. Rather than the typical use of a tree cavity or Wood Duck box for nesting, the merganser apparently nested on top of a muskrat hut constructed in the crotch of a tree. I observed a hen and drake Hooded Merganser on a four-acre wetland restoration in Montgomery Township on 21 March 1995, a few days after it became ice-free. I also saw a pair on 2 April. A hen was present without a drake on 19 May. The wetland basin had been drained for at least 40 years before it was restored in the spring of 1994. In this time, a number of trees grew in the basin.



Hooded Merganser nest, 21 March 1995, Le Sueur County. Photo by Dave Johnson.

The restoration was quickly colonized by muskrats and some of the huts they constructed were at the bases of those trees that, after the restoration, were in standing water. The owner of the property, Bob Gregor, saw a Hooded Merganser hen and several young jump off such a muskrat hut on 21 May. I visited the wetland a few days later and saw a merganser hen and ten young feeding on the marsh. I waded out to the hut and found a slight depression in the top and the remains of several white-shelled eggs. The hut was constructed in the crotch of a green ash, where the five trunks of the tree diverged. The nest was approximately two and a half feet above the surface of the water. **Dave Johnson, 3807 Heather Drive, Eagan, MN 55122.**

HENSLOW'S SPARROW IN WILKIN COUNTY — For the past three summers, I have contracted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to survey breeding birds on native and re-seeded grasslands in western Minnesota. For three-plus weeks in June, I conduct surveys in Douglas, Grant, Wilkin, and Otter Tail counties. The total of 19 units includes nine owned by The Nature Conservancy. Six of the seven plots surveyed in Wilkin County in 1995 were Nature Conservancy tracts. Shortly after 7:00 A.M. on 9 June 1995, I was just beginning the last of six survey points on the Kettledrummer Prairie, a Conservancy holding located five miles north of Foxhome in Wilkin County. While organizing my papers, timer, etc., I heard a faint but clearly audible song that I immediately recognized as that of a Henslow's Sparrow. This species is apparently in serious decline over much of its range. There were only two reports for Minnesota in the spring of 1994, and none for the 1994 summer season. I began moving toward the bird, which would sing several times, then lapse into a period of silence for five to ten minutes. Following a walk-stop-listen routine, I finally approached closely enough to note the flat-headed profile, olive-colored head and nape, and reddish-brown wings. The breast was pale buff overlaid with fine black streaks. The song — although it hardly qualifies as such — was the typical "see-lick" or "tse-lick" often ascribed to this species. Sometimes it sang from such a low perch that I could not see it, but once it sang from the same prominent three-foot-high weed stalk for several minutes. The bird was subsequently seen on 14 and 21 June, always initially located by its song. Mark Otnes found a singing Henslow's at this site on 7 July 1990. The previous summer, Karl Bardon found two singing males at Rothsay W.M.A. in Wilkin County. **Steve Millard, 630 W. Laurel, Fergus Falls, MN 56537.**

CAROLINA WREN AT WILLMAR — At approximately 9:30 A.M. on 6 August 1995 at my home in Willmar, Kandiyohi County, I heard a loud, clear, unusual bird song. I knew I had heard the song before, but at the same time knew it was unusual for this area. I got my 10 x 40 binoculars from inside the house and went out to investigate. The song came from an area several houses south of mine. I looked for the bird, which had stopped singing, and was unable to locate it. At 9:55 A.M., the bird sang again, this time from a box elder tree only 35 feet from where I was seated. As soon as I located the bird with my binoculars, the song and the species came together — it was a Carolina Wren! I had seen and heard the species several times in Missouri and Texas. The large wren was rusty brown above and buff below, with a very prominent white eyebrow. After the bird had flown out of my yard into the next residential block, I located my bird tapes and listened to a recording of a Carolina Wren. The loud, clear, three-part song, repeated several times, matched the song of the bird I had seen and heard. I heard the bird

singing several times in the adjacent block over the next 15 minutes, but did not see it again. **Ronald A. Erpelding, 701 SW 4th St., Willmar, MN.**

CLARK'S GREBE AT AGASSIZ NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE. — On 15 July 1995

Dave Cahlander, Mark Ochs and I made our way to Agassiz N.W.R. after birding Lake of the Woods earlier in the day. We entered the refuge from the east and made our way towards the headquarters building as sunset approached. It was 8:45 P.M. when we stopped at the Headquarters Pool to scan for ducks, grebes and bitterns. A lone Western-type grebe was present among a scattering of Pied-billed, Horned, and Red-necked Grebes. We first viewed the "Western" Grebe through a Swarovski AT–80 at 55X from a distance of 200–250 yards. The view was very good as low sunlight illuminated the grebe and heat waves were absent. As I paused to take a longer look at this bird, it quickly became apparent that we had a classic Clark's Grebe before us. The pale sides and flanks of the swimming bird, and the white lores which clearly extended above the eye caught my attention. Mark quickly looked and noticed the orange-yellow bill and the thinness of the black back edge of the neck. All three of us confirmed these field marks as we observed the bird for about 20 minutes. Notes were taken on the spot and sketches made to document the sighting. After another 15 minutes we were able to compare what we had seen with close views of three Western Grebes, giving us the experience of seeing five of Minnesota's six grebes in one pool. Those Clark's that display the classic plumage pattern are not hard to identify. There are, however, numerous records of individuals that appear to be intermediate between Clark's and Western (see, for example, Eckert in ***The Loon***, 61:99–106 or in *Birding*, 25:304–310 and 27:54–55.). Fortunately, this bird displayed the classic field marks. **Paul Budde, 4612 Colfax Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55409.**

FERRUGINOUS HAWK IN ITASCA COUNTY — One of our conservation officers

called on 15 August, 1995, to report that he had picked up an injured hawk along County Road 35 north of Bowstring Lake in Itasca County. He arrived at our office a short while later with what at first glance appeared to be a Red-shouldered Hawk, but upon closer examination it became apparent that this large, robust bird with a light-colored breast and feathered legs, was not a Red-shouldered. Suspecting one of the western hawks, we consulted the only field guide we had at work that day, a Peterson's *Eastern Birds*. The Ferruginous Hawk was pictured, but since we were dealing with a bird in juvenile plumage and out of range and season, we wanted further confirmation of our identification. Fortunately this bird was double-banded with a United States Fish and Wildlife Service band and a color band, so a quick call to the Bird Banding Laboratory confirmed that this was a Ferruginous Hawk. It was banded by Larry Apple, who works for Bureau of Land Mangament, on 26 June, 1995, near Rawlins, Wyoming. In talking with Larry we also found out that this bird had fledged from an artificial nest structure that the BLM is studying as a mitigation measure for loss of natural nest sites. The bird was thin and had a wing injury so it was taken to Pat Oldham, our local bird rehabilitator, so she could examine it and determine if it needed to be sent to the Raptor Center. Because of her experience in rehabilitating birds in New Mexico, Pat was also able to correctly identify it as a Ferruginous Hawk. Unfortunately, the bird died on 16 August. **Steve and Carol Mortensen, Leech Lake Reservation DNR, Rt. 3, Box 100 Cass Lake, MN 56633.**

In This Issue

Purpose of the M.O.U.

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.

To carry out these aims, we: publish a magazine, ***The Loon***, and a newsletter, *Minnesota Birding;* conduct field trips; encourage and sponsor the preservation of natural areas; and hold seminars where research reports, unusual observations and conservation discussions are presented. We are supported by dues from members, affiliated clubs and special gifts. The M.O.U. wishes to point out that any or all phases of the M.O.U. program could be expanded significantly with gifts, memorials or bequests willed to the organization.

Suggestions to Authors

The editors of ***The Loon*** welcome submissions of articles, "Notes of Interest" and color or black & white photographs. Submissions should be typed, double-spaced and single-sided. Notes of Interest should be less than two pages. Photographs should be 5"x7". Whenever possible, please include a copy of your submission on any 3 ½ inch computer disk.

Club information and other announcements of general interest should be sent to the Newsletter editors. 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.

printed on recycled paper

The Loon

WINTER 1995–96
VOLUME 67 – NUMBER 4

The Loon, Minnesota's magazine of birds, is published quarterly by the **Minnesota Ornithologists' Union**, the statewide bird club. Anyone interested may join. All members receive our two publications: ***The Loon*** and *Minnesota Birding*.

M.O.U. PERMANANT ADDRESS:
J.F. Bell Museum of Natural History
10 Church Street S.E.
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455–0104

EDITOR OF *The Loon:*
Robert B. Janssen, 10521 S. Cedar Lake Road, #212, Minnetonka, MN 55305 (612-546-4220). The Editor invites articles, short notes, and illustrations. See back cover for details.

ASSOCIATE EDITORS OF *The Loon:*
Kim Eckert, 8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804; Anthony Hertzel, 8461 Pleasant View Dr., Mounds View MN 55112; Peder Svingen, 2602 E. 4th St, Duluth, MN 55812; Dr. Harrison Tordoff, Bell Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455; Nancy Weber, 24420 – 224th Ave. SE, Maple Valley, WA 98038; **PHOTO EDITOR:** Warren Nelson, 603 2nd St. NW, Aitkin, MN 56431.

MEMBERSHIPS:
Yearly donations to join the M.O.U. are: Regular $20, Youth (through age 17) $15; Family $30; Supporting $50; Life $400. Canadian and Foreign Subscriptions, $25. Also available are back issues of ***The Loon*** ($3 each ppd.) and M.O.U. checklists of Minnesota bird (minimum lots of 20 for $5 postage paid).

EDITORS OF *Minnesota Birding:*
Jim and Jude Williams, 3326 Martha Lane, Minnetonka, MN 55345. Published bi-monthly.

MINNESOTA BIRD REPORTS:
Statewide 612-780-8890
Duluth 218-525-5952

E-MAIL ADDRESS:
mou@biosci.cbs.umn.edu

WWW SITE:
http://biosci.cbs.umn.edu/~mou

MOU OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: Bonnie Mulligan, 11421 Live Oak Drive, Minnetonka MN 55305
VICE PRESIDENT: Louis Claeson, 10280 Colorado Rd, Bloomington MN 55438
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Elizabeth Bell, 5868 Pioneer Rd S, St. Paul Park MN 55071
RECORDING SECRETARY: Frani Lowe, 4717 Elliot Ave. S., Minneapolis MN 55407
TREASURER: Ann Kessen, 3114 Russel Ave N, Minneapolis MN 55411

MOU COMMITTEES AND CHAIRPERSONS

FIELD TRIPS/EDUCATION: Richard J. Sandve, 5101 Vincent Ave. S, Minneapolis MN 55410
MINNESOTA ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORDS: Kim Eckert, 8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth MN 55804
NOMINATIONS: Paul Egeland, 8633 Harrison Circle, Bloomington MN 55437
PAPER SESSION: Carrol Henderson, 640 119th Lane NE, Blaine MN 55434
RESEARCH/RECORDS: Karl Bardon,1430 – 100th Ave. NW, #212, Coon Rapids MN 55433
SAVALOJA MEMORIAL FUND: Kim Risen, 5756 Brunswick Ave. N, Crystal MN 55428
SLIDE LIBRARY: Wally Swanson, 128 Buchanon St, Waterville MN 56096

AFFILIATED CLUBS OF THE MINNESOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

AGASSIZ AUDUBON SOCIETY – *President:* Gladwin Lynne, 523 Montanna, Warren MN 56762
ALBERT LEA AUDUBON SOCIETY – *President:* Al Batt, Rt 1 Box 56A, Hartland MN 56042
AUDUBON CHAPTER OF MINNEAPOLIS – *President:* Terence Brashear, 2100 Garfield Ave. S #1, Minneapolis MN 55405
AUSTIN AUDUBON CHAPTER – *President:* Richard Smaby, 601–17th St. SW, Austin MN 55912
BEE-NAY-SHE COUNCIL – *President:* Hulda Lind, Rt. 2, Box 2980, Palisade MN 56469
CENTRAL MINNESOTA AUDUBON SOCIETY – *President:* John Peck, 12299 Sauk River Rd, St. Cloud MN 56301
COTTONWOOD COUNTY BIRD CLUB – *President:* Ellis Gerber, Box 113, Mountain Lake MN 56159
DULUTH AUDUBON SOCIETY – *President:* Susan Wittkopf, 534 E Skyline Parkway, Duluth MN 55805
FARGO-MOORHEAD AUDUBON SOCIETY – *President:* Ken Huntley, 1810–16th St S, Moorhead MN 56560
HIAWATHA VALLEY AUDUBON CLUB – *President:* Gretchen Johnson, RR 1 Box 8M, Dakota MN 55925
JACKSON COUNTY BIRD CLUB – *President:* Mary Jo Christopherson, P.O. Box 806, Lakefield MN 56150
LAKES AREA BIRDING CLUB – *President:* Bob Burke, RR 3 Box 219, Pelican Rapids MN 56572
MANKATO BIRD CLUB – *President:* Erlys Krueger, RR 2 Box 77, LeCenter MN 56057
MINNEAPOLIS AUDUBON SOCIETY – *President:* Barb Galambos, 4375 Wooddale Ave. S, Minneapolis MN 55424
MINNESOTA BIRDING NETWORK – *E-mail:* wncarols@vax2.winona.msus.edu
MN RIVER VALLEY AUDUBON CHAPTER – *President:* Craig Mandel, 10211 Cedar Lake Rd #120, Minnetonka MN 55305
MISSISSIPPI HEADWATERS AUDUBON SOCIETY – *President:* Leon L. Johnson, 12769 Irvine Ave. NW, Bemidji MN 56601
RICE COUNTY BIRD CLUB – *President:* Ray Simon, 1237 Hazelwood Way, Northfield MN 55057
ROSEVILLE BIRD CLUB – *President:* Margaret E. Kehr, 988 W Country Road D, St. Paul MN 55112
ST. PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY – *President:* Dorothy Waltz, 2095 Delaware Ave., Mendota Heights MN 55118
ZUMBRO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY – *President:* Joel Dunnette, 4526 County Road 3 SW, Byron MN 55920

ISSN 0024–645X

Minnesota's Second Northern Wheatear

Jay Hamernick

As it turned out, it was a bird just waiting to be found. But what a treat it was to be the finder! Wednesday, 27 September 1995, dawn: beautiful. A good day (ah, retirement is so great!) for a drive to Duluth for some possible late shorebirds. Birding on the way up was fun although nothing to be remarked. About 10:30 A.M. I pulled off I–35 at the 40th Avenue west exit, parked, changed the scope from window mount to tripod, grabbed the binocs and, ducking under the gate, headed for the water.

A number of migrant White-crowneds and White-throateds, a fair number of warblers, mostly Palms and Yellow-rumpeds, and juncos get some hasty glances. Keep going. Topping the containment dike I sight the scope on a few shorebirds: just several Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers, a very few Pectoral and Least Sandpipers. "Nuts, all this way and no more than that. Oh, there's a dowitcher. Long-billed? I'll just keep heading around to the left, in case I've overlooked something." Still those songbirds flitting ahead of me, now a few Laplands Longspurs among them. Still not much for shorebirds. And so I turned to check the sparrows and warblers along the dike.

While checking the shorebirds I was only vaguely aware that there were evidently a few juncos among the songbirds. At least there was something rather gray with white in the tail. "Wait just a minute, something's not right. That's no junco. Yellow-rumped? Palm? Longspur? Sparrow?" (Powers of observation and all reason fly off during panic excitement.) "'Oh me of little faith and slow to believe,' could that be a wheatear? I have never seen a wheatear. They do not occur in Minnesota. Which pocket is that field guide in? Is it still in the truck? Where is anybody else? Is the bird still there? Get the scope on it. Hold still bird! Quick, the binocs. Here's Peterson—blasted thing won't come out of the pocket. There! Now, what page? Is he still there? Hold still! Got it. . . . I can't believe it, it's a Northern Wheatear! It really is! A life bird! They don't occur in Minnesota! Where is anybody? They'll never believe it."

What were the marks? Having calmed down (a little), I believe the first mark that became pronounced to me was the bolt upright posture. Never had I seen a songbird with such a stance. As I acknowledged that, other things began to come into focus about the bird. The size was not in fact a great deal larger, if any, than many of the other migrants working over the short grass of the dike. The color was somewhat of a brownish-gray on the back, the under parts were whitish but with a lot of buffy around the neck, breast and flanks. The rump was the white that I had seen "out of the corner of my eye" but thinking of the outer feathers of a junco's tail. The tail appeared black with white sides though obviously not like a junco. And that tail kept bobbing up and down. For 15 or 20 minutes I watched with binocs and scope at about ten to 25 yards, comparing what I was seeing with the illustration in Peterson's Eastern field guide. It seemed a fairly close match with the winter plumage depiction. A few other notes made: bill all black and straight, slimmer than the other thrushes; light superciliary stripe; dark lores and line behind the eye; wingtips reached about half way down the black on the tail; active bird though rather approachable. Time to find somebody!

Back to the truck and over to Perkin's

Northern Wheatear, 28 September 1995, Duluth. Photo by Terence P. Brashear.

and a phone. Nobody answering, just machines. Think! Oh, yeah, it's September, Hawk Ridge. And in a little while there was Kim Eckert, a few quick words and the word began to go out. And the bird stayed put! Almost as satisfying as seeing it myself, the pleasure of sharing and of others seeing it as well: later that day, and for some days to come. And still later the notes and calls and brief chats on other occasions out the window of the truck or over a scope. The warm greetings, congrats, thanks from folks who got to see it as well. A thoughtful note from Peder Svingen with an article "Field Identification of West Palearctic Wheatears" from British Birds, May 1987. Much appreciated, though I'm afraid I'm not in that class of observers/identifiers. I'll settle for Northern Wheatear, not in male breeding plumage.

Judging from the November ABA *Winging It*, it was a good year for wheatears on the East Coast, and several from the interior besides our own. As it became obvious, I was in the right place at the right moment. Had I decided to come the next day it would have been to see the wheatear reported on the hotline. The next birder on the spot would have had that distinct thrill of discovery that birders know so well, and the joy of sharing it. That this time it was mine just enabled me to repay a little of the debt I've run up to those many generous folks who have given me a call when something "good" showed up. **5894 Kitkerry Court N., Shoreview, MN 55126.**

Recent Trends of Breeding Birds in Minnesota and Minnesota Forested Regions 1966–1993

Gerald Niemi,[1] Ann Lima,[2] JoAnn Hanowski,[2] and Lee Pfannmuller [2]

Abstract

Trends over the past 28 years (1966–1993) were examined for the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) roadside routes sampled in Minnesota with a special emphasis on those routes sampled in the primary forested areas (strata 20 and 28). For 117 species examined, 49 (42%) species have shown no change in the state or in strata 20 and 28. A total of 42 (36%) species have shown a significant ($P<0.05$) increase, 25 (21%) species have shown a significant decline in either the state, strata 20 and 28, or both, and 1 (1%) species has shown a decline statewide, but an increase in strata 20 and 28. A variety of potential explanations are presented to identify possible causes or commonalities among the species for the increases or declines. Among the possible explanations discussed were changes in agriculture, wetlands, forests, and urbanized habitats and landscapes over the past 28 years.

Introduction

The National Biological Service, formerly through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, has coordinated the gathering of roadside Breeding Bird Survey routes throughout the United States and Canada since 1966. These censuses are commonly referred to as BBS and they were selected in a random but systematic fashion to

cover this broad geographic area. The BBS routes in Minnesota, as elsewhere, are censused by volunteers who drive a 25 mile route in which stops are made every 0.5 miles and a three minute count is made at each of the 50 stops.

The BBS represents one of the few standardized bird censuses that covers a broad geographic region in which census data have systematically been gathered for a relatively long period of time. Among the major objectives for establishing these censuses was to detect long term population trends for bird species. These census data have been a major source of information for quantifying the decline of forest songbirds in selected portions of the eastern United States over the past 25 years (e.g., Sauer and Droege 1992). In Minnesota, there are currently more than 80 roadside routes censused; however, about 30 routes were added in the early 1990s. Hence, this analysis will focus on the 55 that have been censused since 1966. Here we report the results of the BBS routes censused within the primary forest areas of Minnesota, but relate this information to the trends or lack of trends throughout the state. This information follows the last summary presented by Janssen (1990) who summarized the results from 1966 to 1989. Our primary objective is to identify species that are declining, increasing, or remaining relatively stable based on these censuses. We also provide some perspective on possible reasons for these trends; however, it is difficult to relate these trends to specific habitat changes because roadside counts do not sample discrete habitat types.

Methods

We used 27 routes that have been censused in strata 20 and 28 of northern and central Minnesota (Figure 1) as the primary data base, but included all 55 routes that have been censused throughout Minnesota to examine the consistency of the trends. Strata 20 and 28 are physiographic regions that were defined by Robbins *et al.* (1986) of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as distinct regions of the country that better represent breeding bird habitats than political boundaries such as between states. The physiographic regions were primarily based on Aldrich (1963) who defined different life zones across North America. Stratum 20 represents the Great Lakes Transition Forest and extends from Minnesota and Wisconsin to central Michigan. Stratum 28 is the Spruce-Hardwood Forest and extends from Minnesota and southeastern Manitoba to the northeastern United States and eastern Canada.

The data used were based on the route mean relative abundance, trend, and weights which we received from J. Sauer (Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, NBS, Laurel, Md). The weights were incorporated into the analyses to account for the number of years the route was censused and the number of observer changes that occurred on the route (Sauer and Droege 1992). Mean trends were adjusted using the product of the mean relative abundance and the weight of the route. For example, a route with a low relative abundance of a particular species and which was only censused on a few years would not contribute as much to the calculation of the mean as a route which had a high abundance and was censused in every year.

Trends were considered significantly different from zero if the p-value from a Student's T-test (after adjusting for the product of the mean abundance and weight) were less than 0.05. We only included species in the analysis which met the following criteria: 1) the species was present on at least 14 routes, and 2) the product of mean abundance and number of routes was greater than 20. These criteria were established to include only those that were common enough to determine reliable trends over time. We follow the groupings for forest-related species that were used in the Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) for those species specifically associated with Minnesota's forest areas (Jaakko Poyry Inc. 1992).

Results

There are a total of 117 species that

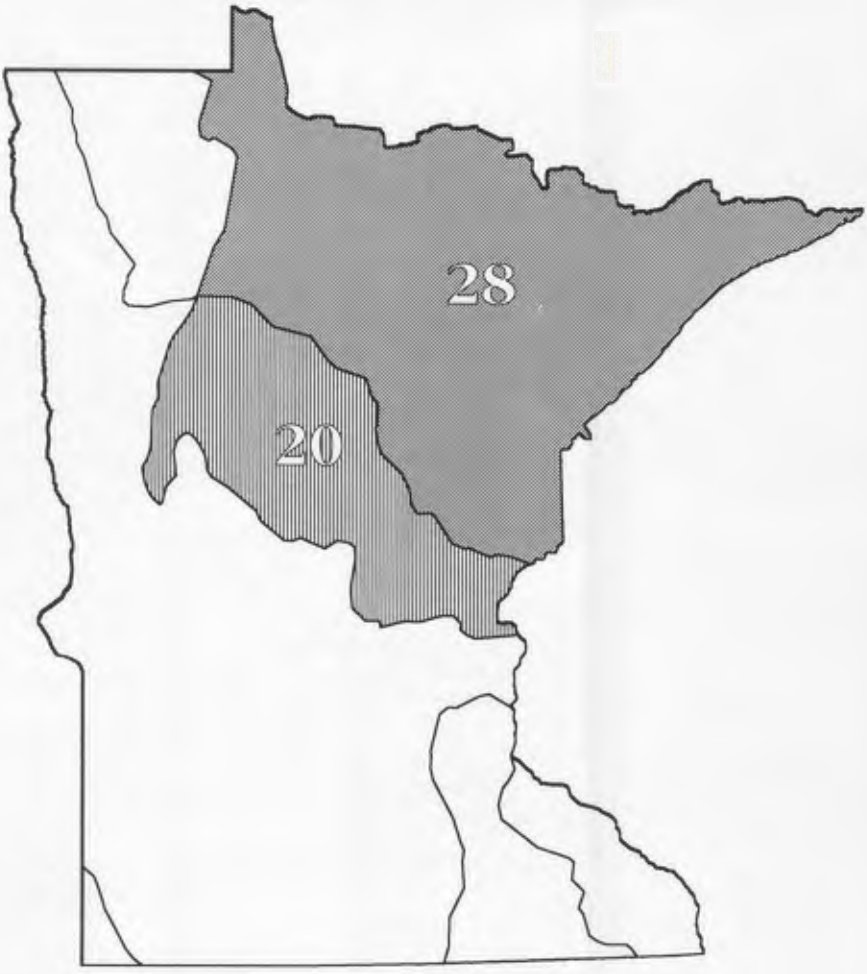


Figure 1. Locations of strata 20 and 28 in Minnesota.

were common enough to include in the statistical analysis of trends over the past 28 years. A complete list of all data including number of routes, mean abundance per route, mean annual trend, standard error of the trend, and statistical analyses of the trends can be obtained by contacting the first author.

A total of 49 of the 117 species (42%) which were common did not show a significant ($P<0.05$) trend for either the whole state or in strata 20 and 28. These species include the following: Great Blue Heron, Ring-necked Pheasant, Sora, Killdeer, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Chimney Swift, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Great Crested Flycatcher, Western Kingbird, Eastern Kingbird, Horned Lark, Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow, American Crow, Winter Wren, Veery, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Cedar Waxwing, European Starling, Red-eyed

Vireo, Golden-winged Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Northern Parula, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Ovenbird, Mourning Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Canada Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Rufous-sided Towhee, Clay-colored Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Common Grackle, Purple Finch, American Goldfinch, and House Sparrow. The results for these species will not be discussed further.

The remaining species were grouped into categories based on whether their trends in the forested areas of strata 20 and 28 were consistent or inconsistent with statewide trends.

Species Decreasing

A total of 25 of 117 species (21%) have shown a decline over the past 28 years based on the BBS. Ten of the 25 species have shown a decline in both strata 20 and 28 and throughout the state. These species include the following (note the numbers in parentheses are the mean annual trend in percent for the entire state and for strata 20 and 28, respectively):

American Bittern (-3.7, -1.6)
Ruffed Grouse (-2.7, -2.6)
Belted Kingfisher (-0.8, -1.1)
Northern Flicker (-3.3, -2.3)
Eastern Wood-Pewee (-1.4, -2.5)
Least Flycatcher (-2.0, -2.0)
Ruby-crowned Kinglet (-5.4, -5.5)
Grasshopper Sparrow (-4.1, -4.8)
Western Meadowlark (-5.6, -5.0)
Brown-headed Cowbird (-2.7, -3.9)

Of these species the greatest decline (>5% per year) is shown for the Ruby-crowned Kinglet and Western Meadowlark. Six of the species are associated with forests including the Ruffed Grouse, Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Least Flycatcher, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

Five species have shown a significant decline only in the forested areas, but not a significant decline throughout the state. These species include:

Blue-winged Teal (-0.8, -0.6)
Brown Thrasher (-0.4, -1.9)
Field Sparrow (-0.1, -1.1)
Vesper Sparrow ((-1.8, -1.8)
Eastern Meadowlark (-0.8, -2.5)

Among these species only the Brown Thrasher is associated with forest areas.

Ten species have shown significant decreases when data throughout the state are examined, but not significant declines when only strata 20 and 28 are included. They include (no trend data for strata 20 and 28 are included for rare species of these strata):

Northern Harrier (-0.8, 0.3)
Gray Partridge (-4.2)
American Coot (-3.1)
Upland Sandpiper (-1.1)
Franklin's Gull (-16.0)
Black Tern (-4.5)
Red-headed Woodpecker (-2.8,-1.0)
Purple Martin (-2.8, -2.6)
Northern Rough-winged Swallow (-1.8)
American Redstart (-1.4, -1.5)

Of these species only the American Redstart and Red-headed Woodpecker are associated with forest areas.

There is only one species, which is not associated with forest areas, that has shown a significant decline when data throughout the state are examined, but a significant increase when only data from strata 20 and 28 are included. This is the Bank Swallow (-6.3, 5.2).

Species Increasing

A total of 42 of 117 species (36%) have shown significant increases on the BBS routes over the past 28 years throughout the Minnesota. Of these species, 28 have shown increases both throughout the state and in strata 20 and 28. They include:

Common Loon (+2.8, +2.9)
Pied-billed Grebe (+0.7, +1.2)
Canada Goose (+15.6, + 7.7)

Wood Duck (+2.1, +2.3)
Mallard (+4.3, +3.9)
Red-tailed Hawk (+3.9, +3.9)
Common Snipe (+2.9, +4.6)
Downy Woodpecker (+2.0, +2.3)
Hairy Woodpecker (+2.4, +3.2)
Pileated Woodpecker (+2.6, +2.6)
Eastern Phoebe (+1.8, +2.2)
Blue Jay (+2.5, +2.0)
Common Raven (+2.6, +2.5)
Black-capped Chickadee (+4.9, +4.1)
Red-breasted Nuthatch (+1.0, +1.0)
White-breasted Nuthatch (+1.7, +3.0)
Sedge Wren (+4.8, +6.6)
Eastern Bluebird (+4.6, +4.2)
Swainson's Thrush (+2.8, +2.8)
Yellow-throated Vireo (+2.1, +2.4)
Yellow-rumped Warbler (+3.9, +3.9)
Black-throated Green Warbler (+1.5, +1.5)
Pine Warbler (+5.5, +5.5)
Black-and-White Warbler (+1.3, +1.3)
Scarlet Tanager (+1.6, +1.6)
Swamp Sparrow (+4.0, +4.8)
Northern Oriole (+1.3, +1.8)
Evening Grosbeak (+9.9, +9.9)

Many of these species are highly associated with forested areas of Minnesota (strata 20 and 28), including Wood Duck, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Common Raven, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Swainson's Thrush, Yellow-throated Vireo, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Pine Warbler, Black-and-White Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Oriole, and Evening Grosbeak.

There are ten species that are significantly increasing when data throughout the state are included, but not significantly increasing when data from only strata 20 and 28 are included. They are (trends are not included for rare species of strata 20 and 28):

Double-crested Cormorant (+8.2)
Great Egret (+12.1)
American Kestrel (+1.1, +0.7)
Ring-billed Gull (+5.6)
"Traill's" Flycatcher (+1.4, +1.5)
Tree Swallow (+1.5, +1.2)
Northern Cardinal (+4.9)
Chipping Sparrow (+1.8, +1.8)
Le Contes Sparrow (+3.7)
Brewer's Blackbird (+3.4, +3.7)

Four of these species, American Kestrel, Tree Swallow, Northern Cardinal, and Chipping Sparrow, are to some extent associated with forested habitats. However, each is also highly associated with agricultural and urbanized landscapes.

Four species have been increasing within the forested areas of strata 20 and 28, but when routes throughout the state are included the trends are not significant. They include:

Black-billed Cuckoo (+0.6, +2.2)
House Wren (+0.7, +2.0)
Marsh Wren (-0.2, +5.1)
Warbling Vireo (+0.3, +1.7)

Of these species only the Marsh Wren is not associated with forested habitats, although the House Wren is also highly associated with urbanized landscapes.

Discussion

The BBS is not designed to identify specific causes for changes that have been observed in breeding birds over the past 28 years. Yet, when suites of species with similarities in life history show parallel trends, then this may suggest commonalities that are associated with these trends. To provide possible explanations for some of these trends, we have identified several common factors that may be associated with or at least contributing factors to some of the trends observed. It is emphasized that these are speculative and each would require more thorough study to substantiate the extent of the association with the trends observed. Moreover, it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss in detail the potential reasons for these trends.

Species Declining

Of the 26 species showing declining patterns, most can be grouped into three

broad categories reflecting their primary habitat and landscape associations.

Species associated with forests

Eight of the declining species are associated with forested habitats. These species include the Ruffed Grouse, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Least Flycatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and American Redstart as well as the Red-headed Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, and Brown Thrasher which are also associated with agricultural landscapes. Three of the species are associated with early-successional stages of forest development such as the Red-headed Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, and Brown Thrasher, while the Eastern Wood-Pewee, Least Flycatcher, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet are associated with more mature stages (Green and Niemi 1978). The Ruffed Grouse and American Redstart can both be associated with a variety of age classes. It is unclear how forest management practices are affecting these species, when a variety of species of mature forests tend to be increasing (e.g., see below).

One common denominator in birds of the forest that are decreasing is that the Eastern Wood-Pewee, Least Flycatcher, and American Redstart all tend to forage by "flycatching" for insects in the subcanopy of the forest. Little is known about how the insect forage base is affected by forest harvesting practices. Moreover, little is known about how well most of these species are reproducing in the forest. Yet, in one of the few studies conducted, Hanski *et al.* (ms.) found that nest loss for 48 Least Flycatcher nests was 85% in a managed, but unfragmented forest area in the Chippewa National Forest.

	All of Minnesota					Minnesota routes in strata 20 & 28				
Species	#rts	Mean abund	Mean trend	SE trend	Prob	#rts	Mean abund	Mean trend	SE trend	Prob
Common Loon	32	1.7	2.8	0.6	0.00	25	2.1	2.9	0.8	0.00
Pied-billed Grebe	37	0.7	0.7	0.3	0.01	18	0.4	1.2	0.2	0.00
Double-crested Cormorant	25	1.4	8.2	0.5	0.00	-	-	-	-	-
American Bittern	45	0.9	-3.7	0.4	0.00	24	1.1	-1.6	0.4	0.00
Great Blue Heron	52	2.0	0.4	0.5	0.49	25	2.2	-0.9	1.0	0.35
Great Egret	16	1.3	12.1	1.1	0.00	-	-	-	-	-
Canada Goose	38	4.3	15.6	1.4	0.00	16	3.3	7.7	0.7	0.00
Wood Duck	45	1.1	2.1	0.5	0.00	20	1.1	2.3	0.5	0.00
Mallard	55	6.3	4.3	1.1	0.00	27	3.4	3.9	1.0	0.00
Blue-winged Teal	47	1.7	-0.8	0.6	0.18	20	1.0	-0.6	0.2	0.01
Northern Harrier	42	0.5	-0.8	0.2	0.00	20	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.30
Red-tailed Hawk	51	0.7	3.9	0.3	0.00	23	0.5	3.9	0.3	0.00
American Kestrel	54	1.7	1.1	0.4	0.01	26	1.3	0.7	0.5	0.20
Gray Partridge	26	1.3	-4.2	0.6	0.00	-	-	-	-	-
Ring-necked Pheasant	35	12.9	-1.8	1.9	0.35	-	-	-	-	-
Ruffed Grouse	32	0.7	-2.7	0.3	0.00	24	0.8	-2.6	0.3	0.00
Sora	39	0.6	-0.2	0.2	0.44	19	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.19
American Coot	30	1.7	-3.1	0.6	0.00	-	-	-	-	-
Killdeer	54	10.1	0.00	0.7	1.00	26	5.5	-0.4	1.0	0.68
Upland Sandpiper	33	1.1	-1.1	0.4	0.01	-	-	-	-	-
Common Snipe	47	2.8	2.9	1.1	0.01	27	3.8	4.6	0.9	0.00
Franklin's Gull	18	24.6	-16.0	6.7	0.03	-	-	-	-	-
Ring-billed Gull	30	1.5	5.6	0.7	0.00	-	-	-	-	-
Black Tern	38	2.0	-4.5	0.7	0.00	-	-	-	-	-
Rock Dove	44	14.6	-1.0	1.5	0.49	16	5.8	3.2	2.2	0.16
Mourning Dove	51	32.9	-0.4	1.3	0.73	23	11.5	-0.2	1.3	0.91
Black-billed Cuckoo	55	1.9	0.6	0.5	0.26	27	2.2	2.2	0.9	0.02
Chimney Swift	45	2.4	0.4	0.7	0.54	22	1.7	-0.5	1.3	0.70
Belted Kingfisher	50	0.5	-0.8	0.2	0.00	27	0.4	-1.1	0.2	0.00
Red-headed Woodpecker	45	3.5	-2.8	0.6	0.00	18	1.1	-1.0	0.5	0.08
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	41	1.6	-0.9	0.6	0.14	27	2.2	-1.3	0.9	0.18
Downy Woodpecker	54	0.9	2.0	0.3	0.00	27	1.1	2.3	0.4	0.00
Hairy Woodpecker	53	0.6	2.4	0.2	0.00	27	0.8	3.2	0.3	0.00
Northern Flicker	55	4.7	-3.3	0.7	0.00	27	4.0	-2.3	0.9	0.01
Pileated Woodpecker	38	0.6	2.6	0.2	0.00	27	0.6	2.6	0.2	0.00
Eastern Wood-Pewee	52	1.8	-1.4	0.5	0.00	27	2.5	-2.5	0.7	0.00
"Traill's" Flycatcher	39	4.4	1.4	0.6	0.04	26	6.1	1.5	0.9	0.11
Least Flycatcher	53	5.4	-2.0	0.4	0.00	27	9.8	-2.0	0.8	0.02

Appendix 1. Number of routes included in species analysis, weighted mean abundance (individuals observed/route), mean annual trend in percent, standard error (SE) of trend, and probability (p-value) of trend being equal to 0.

Species	All of Minnesota					Minnesota routes in strata 20 & 28				
	#rts	Mean abund	Mean trend	SE trend	Prob	#rts	Mean abund	Mean trend	SE trend	Prob
Eastern Phoebe	47	1.3	1.8	0.4	0.00	24	1.8	2.2	0.7	0.01
Great Crested Flycatcher	55	3.9	-0.1	0.5	0.86	27	5.7	-0.5	0.9	0.57
Western Kingbird	24	0.9	0.3	0.4	0.55	-	-	-	-	-
Eastern Kingbird	55	3.7	0.6	0.6	0.29	27	3.3	-0.1	0.6	0.90
Horned Lark	40	14.1	0.9	1.5	0.56	-	-	-	-	-
Purple Martin	47	3.8	-2.8	0.8	0.00	21	5.1	-2.6	1.6	0.11
Tree Swallow	55	5.8	1.5	0.8	0.05	27	8.9	1.2	1.1	0.27
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	37	2.0	-1.8	0.5	0.00	-	-	-	-	-
Bank Swallow	47	4.9	-6.3	1.7	0.00	21	3.2	5.2	2.1	0.02
Cliff Swallow	50	46.4	2.3	3.8	0.55	24	23.4	4.8	2.9	0.11
Barn Swallow	55	21.0	0.8	1.2	0.52	27	7.7	-1.7	1.0	0.09
Blue Jay	55	7.4	2.5	0.7	0.00	27	9.2	2.0	0.8	0.03
American Crow	55	23.3	1.3	0.7	0.08	27	21.6	1.1	1.1	0.35
Common Raven	26	2.3	2.6	0.5	0.00	21	2.8	2.5	0.7	0.00
Black-capped Chickadee	55	2.3	4.9	1.0	0.00	27	3.6	4.1	1.9	0.04
Red-breasted Nuthatch	24	1.0	1.0	0.3	0.00	21	1.2	1.0	0.4	0.01
White-breasted Nuthatch	48	1.2	1.7	0.6	0.01	23	1.3	3.0	1.2	0.02
House Wren	54	9.3	0.7	0.6	0.31	26	4.4	2.0	0.8	0.02
Winter Wren	18	2.0	-0.9	0.6	0.15	17	2.1	-0.9	0.6	0.17
Sedge Wren	52	4.2	4.8	1.1	0.00	26	5.8	6.6	1.4	0.00
Marsh Wren	35	1.3	-0.2	0.5	0.77	17	0.7	5.1	0.5	0.00
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	22	1.0	-5.4	0.4	0.00	19	1.1	-5.5	0.5	0.00
Eastern Bluebird	45	1.3	4.6	0.4	0.00	22	1.8	4.2	0.7	0.00
Veery	36	16.4	-1.1	0.8	0.16	27	21.7	-1.1	1.0	0.29
Swainson's Thrush	16	2.1	2.8	1.0	0.01	16	2.1	2.8	1.0	0.01
Hermit Thrush	23	4.2	1.5	0.8	0.08	21	4.6	1.5	0.9	0.11
American Robin	55	31.5	1.0	1.0	0.31	27	30.9	0.4	0.8	0.61
Gray Catbird	55	3.5	-0.1	0.4	0.73	27	4.2	-0.9	0.6	0.14
Brown Thrasher	55	3.4	-0.4	0.6	0.47	27	1.8	-1.9	0.5	0.00
Cedar Waxwing	50	3.3	0.6	0.7	0.34	27	5.1	-0.3	0.9	0.77
European Starling	55	33.4	0.6	2.1	0.78	27	13.1	2.2	2.3	0.36
Yellow-throated Vireo	30	0.8	2.1	0.4	0.00	17	1.2	2.4	0.7	0.01
Warbling Vireo	52	2.5	0.3	0.5	0.55	25	2.4	1.7	0.7	0.03
Red-eyed Vireo	53	15.6	0.5	0.5	0.37	27	30.5	0.5	0.9	0.57
Golden-winged Warbler	25	0.9	0.4	0.3	0.22	23	1.0	0.4	0.3	0.26
Nashville Warbler	27	13.8	0.8	1.0	0.46	23	16.2	0.8	1.2	0.53
Northern Parula	20	1.1	-0.4	0.3	0.25	19	1.1	-0.4	0.3	0.28
Yellow Warbler	52	4.8	0.3	0.8	0.67	25	7.5	1.2	1.4	0.40
Chestnut-sided Warbler	31	13.3	0.00	0.9	1.00	26	16.0	0.00	1.0	0.98
Magnolia Warbler	16	3.8	2.8	1.4	0.06	16	3.8	2.8	1.4	0.06
Yellow-rumped Warbler	21	2.1	3.9	1.0	0.00	21	2.1	3.9	1.0	0.00
Black-throated Green Warbler	19	2.1	1.5	0.6	0.02	19	2.1	1.5	0.6	0.02
Blackburnian Warbler	21	2.3	0.6	0.4	0.15	21	2.3	0.6	0.4	0.15
Pine Warbler	16	1.0	5.5	0.5	0.00	16	1.0	5.5	0.5	0.00
Black-and-white Warbler	27	3.1	1.3	0.5	0.02	24	3.5	1.3	0.6	0.04
American Redstart	43	2.3	-1.4	0.6	0.02	26	3.7	-1.5	1.0	0.15
Ovenbird	40	15.3	1.0	0.6	0.10	27	23.1	1.0	0.8	0.25
Mourning Warbler	26	9.4	0.5	1.4	0.70	22	11.1	0.5	1.6	0.74
Common Yellowthroat	55	22.2	0.00	0.9	0.96	27	25.0	0.4	1.2	0.76
Canada Warbler	17	2.2	0.9	0.7	0.20	17	2.2	0.9	0.7	0.20
Scarlet Tanager	41	0.9	1.6	0.4	0.00	27	1.2	1.6	0.5	0.01
Northern Cardinal	21	3.5	4.9	1.2	0.00	-	-	-	-	-
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	53	4.7	-0.6	0.5	0.26	27	7.3	-0.3	0.8	0.72
Indigo Bunting	52	2.8	-0.2	0.6	0.76	26	2.6	0.9	0.9	0.35
Dickcissel	32	7.2	-2.8	1.6	0.09	-	-	-	-	-
Rufous-sided Towhee	19	0.8	-0.1	0.4	0.86	-	-	-	-	-
Chipping Sparrow	55	7.2	1.8	0.8	0.04	27	9.8	1.8	1.3	0.17
Clay-colored Sparrow	48	5.6	0.5	0.5	0.35	24	5.7	0.5	0.8	0.57
Field Sparrow	34	1.9	-0.1	0.3	0.73	15	0.6	-1.1	0.2	0.00
Vesper Sparrow	46	17.6	-1.8	1.0	0.09	18	6.0	-1.8	0.6	0.01
Savannah Sparrow	50	14.9	-0.2	1.2	0.85	22	8.6	0.8	1.6	0.62
Grasshopper Sparrow	46	2.6	-4.1	0.7	0.00	18	1.5	-4.8	1.0	0.00
Le Conte's Sparrow	20	1.5	3.7	0.8	0.00	-	-	-	-	-
Song Sparrow	55	18.0	0.8	1.1	0.43	27	20.4	1.0	1.1	0.40
Swamp Sparrow	46	2.6	4.0	0.6	0.00	27	3.9	4.8	0.9	0.00
White-throated Sparrow	28	18.7	0.6	1.3	0.67	23	22.9	0.6	1.6	0.73
Bobolink	47	15.4	-1.5	1.7	0.39	19	8.9	3.1	2.1	0.16
Red-winged Blackbird	55	94.3	0.1	1.6	0.95	27	55.7	0.5	2.5	0.85
Eastern Meadowlark	33	3.0	-0.8	0.5	0.08	18	1.8	-2.5	0.5	0.00
Western Meadowlark	48	34.4	-5.6	1.3	0.00	20	10.9	-5.0	1.0	0.00
Yellow-headed Blackbird	42	18.3	0.5	2.0	0.80	15	3.8	2.3	1.6	0.18
Brewer's Blackbird	47	7.0	3.4	1.4	0.02	24	5.3	3.7	2.2	0.11
Common Grackle	54	57.6	-0.8	1.7	0.61	26	13.7	-0.4	1.9	0.84
Brown-headed Cowbird	54	16.9	-2.7	1.1	0.01	26	10.2	-3.9	1.2	0.00
Northern Oriole	53	4.2	1.3	0.5	0.01	25	3.8	1.8	0.8	0.05
Purple Finch	30	1.4	-0.3	0.5	0.54	23	1.8	-0.3	0.6	0.61
American Goldfinch	55	7.7	0.7	0.9	0.43	27	6.3	1.3	1.2	0.26
Evening Grosbeak	15	2.8	9.9	1.9	0.00	15	2.8	9.9	1.9	0.00
House Sparrow	47	46.6	0.2	2.2	0.94	19	12.2	1.0	1.7	0.55

In another study in Pennsylvania, de Calesta (1994) reported that densities of both Least Flycatcher and Eastern Wood-Pewee were lower in areas highly browsed by deer as compared with areas protected from deer browsing. The potential effects of white-tailed deer management and the recent increase in deer populations within the state on these species are not well understood.

The declining three species may be explained by their preference of habitat type and the change in abundance of these habitats in the landscape over the past 30 years. For example, the relative abundance of Eastern Wood-Pewees in the Chippewa and Superior National Forests in Minnesota was two to three times higher in red and jack pine stands than in aspen stands (Hawrot *et al.* 1995). In the Superior National Forest, the Least Flycatcher was three times more abundant in red pine and sugar maple stands than in aspen and in the Chippewa National Forest, this species highest abundance was in sugar maple and birch habitat. For the American Redstart, the preferred habitat in the Chippewa National Forest was jack pine and oak and in the Superior National Forest their abundance was two times greater in sugar maple than in aspen. Therefore, these species declines may be explained by the conversion of their preferred habitat to aspen type over the past thirty years. These data indicate that populations of these species should be carefully observed in the future and experiments should be undertaken to better address these issues.

Species of agricultural/rural landscapes

Twelve of the 26 species are highly associated with agricultural regions including fields, fence rows, woodlots, pastures, and some with livestock. These species include the Gray Partridge, Upland Sandpiper, Red-headed Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Purple Martin, Brown Thrasher, Field Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Western Meadowlark, and Brown-headed Cowbird. Two additional species, Northern Rough-winged Swallow and Bank Swallow, may also be at least partly associated with some aspects of the change in agricultural areas.

In general, agricultural and farming practices have changed dramatically over the past 28 years. Among these changes include (1) reductions in small, family-owned farms, while the number of large, crop-associated farms have increased, (2) increased size and intensity of livestock feedlots, and (3) reductions in wetlands. The decline of species associated with grassland habitats and agricultural areas has been discussed recently by Johnson and Schwartz (1993) and Herkert (1994). Among the reasons for the declines are reductions and fragmentation of native grasslands, reductions in secondary habitats such as hayfields and pastures, and changes in agricultural practices.

In the list of species that are increasing in Minnesota there are virtually no species that are increasing that are associated with open grasslands and fields. The decline in the Brown-headed Cowbird is likely associated with the decrease of small, family-owned farms that had dairy cows and horses.

Species associated with wetlands

Seven of the 26 species that are declining are highly associated with wetland habitats. These species include the American Bittern, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Harrier, American Coot, Franklin's Gull, Black Tern, and Belted Kingfisher. It is well-known that the availability of wetland habitats has continued to decrease over the past 28 years. However, the specific habitat requirements for most of these species are highly varied. For example, the Belted Kingfisher is highly associated with fish-inhabiting waters in riparian areas with suitable perch sites, while the Blue-winged Teal and American Coot prefer marshes and ponds. There are likely a variety of factors associated with declines among these species.

Species Increasing

As with the species that are decreas-

ing, there are a wide variety of possible reasons for the increase in breeding bird species in Minnesota. We have identified five general groupings that may help explain some of the commonalities for species that are increasing and two specific cases that may be associated these increases.

Species associated with humans and human-dominated landscapes

The human population continues to increase and, hence, humans can have a direct effect on the breeding bird populations or indirect effects through their alteration of habitats and landscapes. A variety of species have become highly associated and successful within habitats dominated by humans. These species include: Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard, Ring-billed Gull, Eastern Phoebe, Tree Swallow, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, House Wren, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, Northern Cardinal, Chipping Sparrow, Evening Grosbeak, and Brewers Blackbird. The reasons for these increases and associations with humans are highly varied, but span the gamut from direct recovery programs (e.g., Canada Goose), nest boxes (e.g., Wood Duck, Tree Swallow, Eastern Bluebird, and House Wren), and bird feeders (e.g., Black-capped Chickadee, nuthatch, and Blue Jay) to opportunistic feeding (e.g., Ring-billed Gull).

Species of fragmented forest landscapes

Although a wide variety of species seem to be declining because of changing agricultural practices, five species that are highly associated with fragmented forests, primarily in agricultural or urbanized landscapes (Green 1991) appear to be increasing. These species include the Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, and Northern Oriole. The life history requirements of these species are much different than the species of open grasslands that are declining (see above) because they are dependent on either open habitats with some trees (Red-tailed Hawk or American Kestrel) or forested areas (e.g., woodlots) within agricultural or urbanized settings.

Species of mature forests

Seven of the species that are increasing are associated with mature forests. They include Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Swainson's Thrush, Black-throated Green Warbler, Pine Warbler, and Scarlet Tanager. Hence, despite a three-fold increase in forest harvesting in Minnesota from 1950 to 1990, there does not appear to be an associated decline in several mature forest-related species. Yet, as described above, several other species such as the Least Flycatcher and Eastern Wood-Pewee are declining. We do not fully understand the reasons for these conflicting trends; however, the changes in forest cover types and age class structure that have occurred over the past 30 years may partially explain these changes. For instance, as described above, the Least Flycatcher and Eastern Wood-Pewee prefer mature northern hardwood and coniferous forests with relatively open subcanopies in comparison with aspen-birch forests. Aspen-birch forests are preferred by the Downy and Hairy Woodpecker and also possibly used substantially by the Pileated Woodpecker. Reasons for increases in the remaining species, however, are not clear because of the lack of specific information on trends for their preferred habitats.

Species of sedge/shrub wetlands

Six of the species that are increasing are highly associated with wetlands primarily comprised of sedge and shrub vegetation. These species include the Common Snipe, "Traill's" Flycatcher, Sedge Wren, Marsh Wren, LeConte's Sparrow, and Swamp Sparrow. As mentioned above, several wetland-associated bird species were declining in Minnesota. However, of the species that were declining, only the American Bittern and Northern Harrier, are likely to be found in the

same types of sedge/shrub wetlands as most of the species listed here. The exception may be the Marsh Wren which is often found in cattail (*Typha* spp.) marshes in which the Blue-winged Teal or American Coot would also be found. However, the Marsh Wren has a much different life history than the teal or coot. The diverse trends observed in wetland-associated species is likely due to these different life history characteristics and also possibly due to the changes in wetlands in different portions of Minnesota. In northern Minnesota, many of the wetlands remain in a relatively natural state, whereas many wetlands of southern, central, and western Minnesota have been highly altered or removed.

Species of lakes and ponds

Four of the species that are increasing are highly associated with lakes and ponds. They include Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, and Great Egret. All of these species are fish and aquatic-feeding species that were likely affected substantially by the use of chlorinated organic compounds in the 1950s and 1960s. In recent times these populations have recovered substantially from relatively low populations in those years. These trends parallel recent trends that have also been observed for the Bald Eagle and Osprey. Many of these populations will need to be carefully observed with respect to the increase in other chemicals such as mercury.

Finally, two species that are increasing may be associated with specific causes. The increase noted in the Black-billed Cuckoo may be associated with the increase of aspen and one of the Black-billed Cuckoo's primary food sources, tent caterpillars. Outbreaks of tent caterpillars are highly associated with aspen forests and the Black-billed Cuckoo is well-known as a consumer of these caterpillars. In contrast, the increase of the Common Raven may be due to the increased availability of carrion through road kills and the associated increase in animal populations such as white-tailed deer.

Acknowledgments

We wish to thank the U.S. National Biological Service for providing us with the trend data and specifically to John Sauer for his cooperation in obtaining these data. Funding for analysis of these data were obtained from the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Minnesota State Legislature through its Legislative Commission for Minnesota Resources. This is contribution number 170 of the Center for Water and the Environment, Natural Resources Research Institute, University of Minnesota, Duluth.

References

Aldrich, J.W. 1963. Life areas of North America. Journal of Wildlife Management 27:530-531.

de Calesta, D.S. 1994. Effect of white-tailed deer on songbirds within managed forests in Pennsylvania. J. Wildlife Manage. 58:711–718.

Green, J.C. 1991. A landscape classification for breeding birds in Minnesota: an approach to describing regional biodiversity. ***The Loon*** 63:80–91.

Green, J.C. and G.J. Niemi. 1978. Birds of the Superior National Forest. USDA Forest Service, Washington D.C.

Hawrot, R. Y. , J.M. Hanowski, A. R. Lima and G. J. Niemi. 1994. 1994 Annual report: bird monitoring in Great Lakes national forests: the Chequamegon, Chippewa, and Superior. Report submitted to North Central Forest Experiment Station by NRRI. 62 pp.

Herkert, J. R. 1994. The effects of habitat fragmentation on midwestern grassland bird communities. Ecological Applications 4:461–471.

Jaakko Poyry Inc. 1992. Forest wildlife. A technical paper for a generic environmental impact statement on timber harvesting and forest manage-ment in Minnesota. Prepared for Minnesota Environmental Quality Board, St. Paul, MN by Jaakko Poyry Consulting, Inc, Tarrytown, NY.

Janssen, R. 1990. Breeding bird survey trends in Minnesota — 1966–1989. ***The***

Loon 62:201–206.
Johnson, D. H. and M.D. Schwartz. 1993. The conservation reserve program and grassland birds. Conservation Biology 7:934–937.
Sauer, J.R. and S. Droege. 1992. Geographic patterns in population trends of neotropical migrants in North America. In Ecology and Conservation of Neotropical Migrant Landbirds. J. M. Hagan III and D.W. Johnston, eds, 26–42. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington D.C.

[1]Natural Resources Research Institute, University of Minnesota, Duluth. 5013 Miller Trunk Highway, Duluth, MN 55811; [2]Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Box 25, D.N.R. Building, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155.

The Louisiana Waterthrush in Southeast Minnesota

Jim Surdick

During the summer of 1995 I was contracted by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resourses to study three neotropical migrants that reside in Beaver Creek Valley State Park. From 22 April to 18 July I studied the Acadian Flycatcher, Cerulean Warbler and Louisiana Waterthrush. The purpose of my appointment was to help determine if a proposed bike trail and fisheries stream improvement would adversely affect these species. Because the Louisiana Waterthrush is listed as a Minnesota species of Special Concern and seemed to be at the greatest risk from the proposed manipulations, I spent most of my time and energy focusing on it. The following is a summary of some of the data I collected.

Beaver Creek Valley State Park is in Houston County and is within the "driftless area". The park has 200- to 250-foot forested bluffs, with some "goat prairies", and a fairly intact lowland hardwood forest in the valley. Flowing through the lowland hardwood forest is Beaver Creek. Beaver Creek is a rocky spring fed trout stream that on average is eight meters wide.

The creek and lowland forest held six Louisiana Waterthrush territories along approximately two miles of creek. Arrival of the first Louisiana Waterthrush is unknown because there were at least three males and a female in the park when I arrived on 22 April. A male and female were already paired and testing rock ledges, root masses, and clumps of leaves for a possible nest site. Out of the six pairs five nests were found. The first nest with chicks was seen on 23 May. The last nest to fledge young was on 28 June. These six pairs provided examples of the rigors many Neotropical migrants face when rearing young. A nest with four eggs as well as the adult female were devoured, apparently by a mammalian predator. A second nest was believed to have been attacked by Blue Jays. It contained five approximately six- to eight-day-old chicks which were all found dead outside of the nest. At another nest the adult male was lost during the chick rearing and the female was only successful in fledging one young. A fourth nest

had four Brown-headed Cowbird eggs and three Louisiana Waterthrush eggs. I immediately removed two cowbird eggs and later two cowbird chicks. Only one Louisiana Waterthrush fledged from this nest. The fifth nest was the only one to fledge five Louisiana Waterthrush young. Out of the five nests found only seven chicks were fledged and two adults were believed to have been killed.

I attempted throughout the summer to determine on what the Louisiana Waterthrush were feeding. Four gizzards of the chicks apparently killed by a Blue Jay were analyzed. In the chicks' gizzards were: seed pod structures, snails (1 to 3 mm shells), adult caddisflies, dragonfly nymphs, adult stoneflies, grass blades (>2.5 cm long), larval mayflies (>2 cm long), larval caddisflies family brachycentridae (2 cm long), fly larvae (1.5 cm long), and pebbles.

Of the observed nestling feedings, approximately 38 of the 75 feedings contained caterpillars. Thirty-four of the 38 feedings were large (greater than two bill lengths) green caterpillars, believed to be Noctuidae larvae or cutworms. Twenty of the feedings contained large winged insects. From 5 June to 20 June mayfly adults and cranefly adults were very abundant. Other prey items identified were two bees or bee mimics and one amphipod.

Discussion

Around the time of hatching adult Louisiana Waterthrush seemed to do a greater amount of flycatching to obtain food. The nesting season coincides with the mass emergence of many aquatic insects. Before hatching time, adult Louisiana Waterthrush obtain a majority of their food from exposed rocks and under fallen leaves in the stream and on the bank. Beaver Creek has a great abundance of two Trichopterans from the genera *Glossosoma* and *Brachycentrus*. These two caddisflies can be found on almost every rock in great abundance. Rocks no bigger than a shoe had over one hundred individuals of each species. These caddisflies can be found on all surfaces of the rocks. They are often within reach of Louisiana Waterthrush and may be an important food source early in the season when other invertebrates are not as common.

One of six Louisiana Waterthrush nests contained Brown-headed Cowbird eggs (four cowbirds eggs and three waterthrush eggs); from point counts conducted through all known Louisiana Waterthrush territories, Brown-headed Cowbirds were the second most common bird species preceded only by American Redstarts. The most cowbird eggs in other nests in the park that I found was two. Two Song Sparrow nests had two cowbird eggs and another had one. Single nests of Northern Cardinal, Eastern Phoebe, Chipping Sparrow, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak were all found to have one cowbird egg.

At Beaver Creek Valley State Park exposed rocks play a very important role in the foraging ecology of the Louisiana Waterthrush. Approximately 85% of all noted foraging sightings occurred from exposed rocks. The bank was used as a foraging substrate 12.5% of the time and logs, weed masses (emergent vegetation) and trees constituted less than 2.5% of all noted foraging sightings. I measured exposed rocks in three series of stream measurements: the first was through Louisiana Waterthrush territories, the second was in areas without any established territories, and the last was near the most common foraging sites. The most common foraging sites had close to three times more surface area of exposed rock than the territory average, and at least six times more surface area than the non-territory areas (Fig. 1). Louisiana Waterthrush do most of their feeding directly from the stream. They do not swim and can only wade into water less than two inches deep. For these reasons it is important that they have access to foraging substrates in the stream. Exposed rocks harbor a great number of invertebrates. The rocks also act as catches for debris floating in the stream. Leaves collect on these rocks and supply another niche for

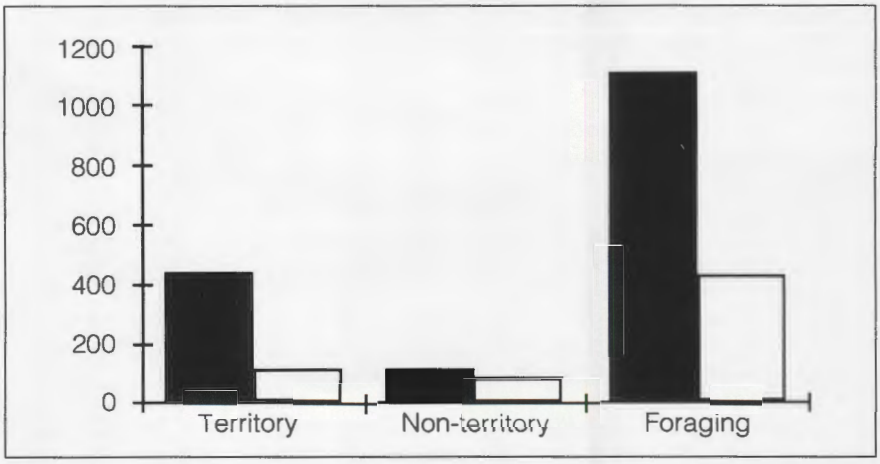


Figure 1. The average amount of surface area of exposed rocks (square inches). The solid bar represents average surface area of all exposed rocks encountered in the transects and the clear bar represents the average surface area of rocks in the small size class (rocks smaller than 5x5 inches).

invertebrates. Louisiana Waterthrush take advantage of this by flipping leaves with their bill, thus exposing the "hiding" invertebrates. Exposed rocks are also used as lookout perches from which they occasionally sally out to capture a flying insect.

In the area of many foraging sites there was large woody debris piled up on the bank and in the stream channel. Large woody debris in some instances diverted the flow of water into a bank and created a new channel. These new channels were often more shallow than the creek and contained a high percentage of exposed rocks. The woody debris piles were also sites of feeding and a possible nest attempt. Large debris piles in streams are known to provide channel complexity and niches for invertebrates (Lamberti and Berg 1995).

New Findings

Louisiana Waterthrush are not known to double brood. One pair tried a second nesting attempt while the male continued to feed a lone fledgling. From 14 June to 28 June this pair attempted to build three new nests, but all failed because the nest sites choosen could not support the leaves they were delivering. If a nest site would have been completed and young successfully reared, this may have been a first. This same pair's first clutch had eggs with a pinkish background color. In all of the literature I have read I did not find any authors who reported finding eggs of this color.

Other biologists studying Louisiana Waterthrush have found a large difference in the length of their territories. In New York, stream territories average 400m in length (n = 8 Eaton 1958); in Connecticut, 358m (range 188–538, n = 9; Craig 1981); in Illinois, 930m (375–1,200, n = 7; Robinson 1990); and at Beaver Creek 422m excluding tributaries (range 115–990, n = 6). At Beaver Creek there were a few small tributaries that were also utilized. Some of these tributaries had portions that were ephemeral; however, four tributaries had flow through July. The pair with the largest territory, 990m, did not have access to any tributaries. The pair with the smallest territory on Beaver Creek, 115m, also utilized 654m of tributary. Louisiana Waterthrush at Beaver Creek had linear territories on average of 714 m where tributaries are included.

Surrounding Stream Surveys

Streams within approximately a ten mile radius of Beaver Creek were searched for the presence of Louisiana Waterthrush. Badger Creek off of state highway 76 had one or two pairs. Portions of this creek were not as heavily forested as Beaver Creek. A power line swath had been cut directly over the stream. This creek also contained a very large population of the exotic garlic mustard. It may also be a potential threat to the state threatened twinleaf found at this site. Jeweled Shooting Star, proposed special concern, and Pickerel Frogs, listed as a special concern species, were also found at this site. Also found were eight gallons of used motor oil and oil filter with one gallon that had been emptied, recently dumped upstream from the spring.

On 11 May Hemingway Creek was visited by Bonnie Erpelding. This creek is approximately ten to 20 miles to the northwest of Beaver Creek. She found a pair of Louisiana Waterthrush. In her opinion the habitat was of good quality and may support more than one pair.

On 17 May I visited Nepstad or Shaltuck Creek in the eastern half of Fillmore County. I found ten Louisiana Waterthrush and I believe there were at least five territories. One individual was seen carrying food. If it had young at this time, it was a week earlier than any of the pairs residing at Beaver Creek Valley State Park. Some of the tributaries to Nepstad have enough flow and are long enough to possibly support a Louisiana Waterthrush territory on their own. Much of this stream corridor belongs to private land owners and is state forest land. The future of the surrounding forest and stream quality are in question. Logging is planned to take place in this valley in the near future. Any changes to the existing forest and stream could be potentially harmful to Louisiana Waterthrush. I also found at this site Jeweled Shooting Star and Pickerel Frogs.

The only other reported Louisiana Waterthrush sighting in the vicinity of Beaver Creek was West Beaver Creek in 1993. The Minnesota County Biological Survey reported one pair residing at this stream.

On 17 and 28 May, I visited several other creeks in Houston County without finding Louisiana Waterthrush. Riceford, Stockholm, Crystal, Storer, Brush Valley, Brownsville, and Winnebago creeks were all visited. I played taped songs of Louisiana Waterthrush at various points along each creek without any response.

Streams that have been heavily grazed, developed or logged tend to be lacking the Louisiana Waterthrush along with some of the rarer plants and animals. The Louisiana Waterthrush may help typify a healthy, functioning, stream valley ecosystem.

Acknowledgments

This study was made possible through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Recreation. Technical support was given by Kathy Bolin, Natural Resource Management Specialist for the MN–DNR, Bonnie Erpelding, Nongame Wildlife Coordinator for the MN–DNR, Jim Wagner, Fisheries Management Specialist for the MN–DNR, and Phil Pellitteri, UW–Madison Extension Entomologist. Field work support was given by John Hockema, Jeff Daly and volunteer Amy Shoemaker.

Literature Cited

Craig, R. J. 1984. Comparative ecology of the Louisiana and Northern Waterthrushes. Ph.D. diss., University of Connecticut, Storrs.

Eaton, S. 1958. A life history of the Louisiana Waterthrush. Wilson Bull. 70:211–36

Lamberti, G.A.; Berg, M.B. 1995. Invertebrates and other benthic features as indicators of environmental change in Juday Creek, Indiana. Natural Areas Journal 15(3):249–58

Robinson, W.D. 1990. Louisiana Waterthrush foraging behavior and microhabitat selection in southern Illinois. Master's thesis, Southern Illinois Univ. Press, Carbondale.

6748 Jacobs Way #2, Madison, WI 53711.

First-year Iceland Gull, 29 March 1995, Red Wing, Goodhue County. Photo by Karl Bardon.

The Spring Season
(1 March to 31 May 1995)

Paul Budde, Steve Carlson, Scott Krych, and Dick Ruhme
Foreword by Peder Svingen

Minnesota's first White Ibis was discovered during this year's International Migratory Bird Count on 13 May. Participation in next year's count will probably go up! Many observers enjoyed an excellent migration of thrushes and warblers. An unprecedented invasion of Western Tanagers during May apparently caught everyone by surprise as most went undocumented.

Although passerine migration was slow to develop and continued well into June for the later migrants, most Minnesota observers appreciated the numbers and variety of warblers during Spring 1995. As in the previous spring, sparse numbers of neotropical migrants arrived during the first ten days of May. Heavy rains fell over the southern two-thirds of Minnesota during the International Migratory Bird Count; the impact remains unclear since data from this Partners in Flight event, first held in 1993, have never been submitted for inclusion in "The Season." Warbler migration peaked during the third week in May and

another new record for county Big Days in Minnesota was set in Roseau County when **162** species were recorded on 27 May.

Red-throated Loons were not reported, a disappointment after last May's concentration off Park Point. All of the "southern" herons were scarce and numbers of **Cattle Egrets** were only 10% of last spring's total. The highlight of 1995 for a handful of Winona County observers was the long-awaited first Minnesota record of **White Ibis**. Compared to the few records in nearby states and provinces, this adult in mid-May was surprising; post-breeding dispersal of an adult or wandering in late summer and fall by an immature is less unexpected.

Waterfowl migration was remarkable for the numbers of **Greater White-fronted Geese** in various North Shore locations, and the third and fourth Duluth records of **Ross' Geese.** In contrast to recent springs, the only other Ross' were singles and only one of the records was from western Minnesota. Also in western Minnesota, two migrating **Ferruginous Hawks** and two **Prairie Falcons** were good finds.

Yellow Rails were reported from 11 counties, more than usual, with most of these in traditional locations. Most unusual were the migrants at the Regal Meadow Nature Conservancy Area, Kandiyohi County. Meanwhile, **Common Moorhen** continues its precarious presence in southeastern Minnesota.

For the fourth spring out of the past five, shorebird migration was dull. A variety of species, from **American Golden-Plover** to **dowitchers**, were sparse in numbers and relatively late. Only one **Piping Plover** was found during migration and only thirteen **American Avocets**, lightly scattered across five counties, were reported. In contrast, good numbers of **Willets** arrived during the last week of April. The four **Whimbrels** were an excellent find during a Clearwater County Big Day. **Hudsonian Godwits** were reported from only seven counties (seventeen l.y.) but five **Red Knots** were found. **Baird's** and **Pectoral Sandpipers** were both scarce, especially in northern Minnesota.

For the second spring in a row, **Little Gull** was found in Hennepin County but not in Duluth! If the concentration of **Bonaparte's Gulls** reported near Grey Cloud Island, Washington County, becomes a regular spectacle, this may become the new place to look for Little Gull in spring. Three Larids making a strong claim for Regular status in Minnesota are **Iceland, Lesser Black-backed,** and **Great Black-backed Gulls**; each were each reported multiple times. All records of these should be carefully documented regardless of status, since species limits remain unclear among the larger gulls and since species not yet recorded in the state may be overlooked if observers become "casual" about dark-mantled gulls.

The only **Burrowing Owl** was a migrant that could not be relocated. Unusually high numbers of **Long-eared Owls** had been reported during the winter season, but most of this spring's excess reports were from non-wintering locales. **Short-eared Owls** sustained their numbers, compared to the ten-year spring average of at least fifteen birds seen in more than eight counties. An influx of **Northern Saw-whet Owls** into the Duluth area beginning in late February was puzzling; the four found dead probably overwintered locally but others may have been early migrants passing through town.

Vividly reflecting the mildness of the preceding season, a **Carolina Wren** successfully overwintered in Rice County. Simply vivid was the male **Mountain Bluebird** seen for three weeks in Washington County, while a female passed briefly through McLeod County. Six additional **Townsend's Solitaires** were found to complement the overwintering birds on Park Point in Duluth and at Lake of the Isles, Hennepin County; this brought the 1994–95 total to twenty individuals. Meanwhile, five additional **Varied Thrushes** were discovered and the

1994–95 total became staggering. Yet another indicator of mild conditions was the **Gray Catbird** that overwintered in Hennepin County, one of the very few that has ever done so in Minnesota.

The Minnesota County Biological Survey continues to discover Casual species on a regular basis; this season's find was a singing **Sprague's Pipit** on suitable territory in Polk County, the county where nesting was documented in 1988 (***The Loon*** 60:104–108). Possibly in response to publicity about this year's survey by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, reports of **Loggerhead Shrikes** were significantly up from the past several springs and one in front of the lighthouse at Two Harbors, Lake County was the most unexpected location.

The previously mentioned "excellent migration" of vireos and warblers produced few surprises. Recapitulating Spring 1994, two more **White-eyed Vireos** were found in the Minnesota River Valley; 22 of the approximately 26 Minnesota records are recent and this species has clearly declared its candidacy for Regular status! There was remarkable agreement among observers regarding the peak migration of vireos and warblers. Peak warbler passage occurred 10–22 May with 26 species on the 18th in Rice County (TBo), 22 species on the 22nd in Lake County (KE, PS), and 20+ species on five dates between the 15th and the 25th in Hennepin County (SC). **Blue-winged Warbler** is now found somewhere in northern Minnesota each spring; this year's extralimital occurrence was a third record for Otter Tail County. The singing **Yellow-throated Warbler** at Sibley State Park was undoubtedly the same individual returning from 1994 and it remained on territory well into the summer. Another returning male (fourth consecutive year!) was the **Kentucky Warbler** at Seven Mile Creek County Park. Concluding this familiar warbler refrain, only one **Yellow-breasted Chat** was found.

Only one **Summer Tanager** was reported but **Western Tanagers** invaded Minnesota in unprecedented numbers. Unfortunately, only seven of the nineteen have been documented by photograph or written details; the other twelve reports of this Casual species (involving thirteen birds) can only be considered "probable." Although many of the undocumented reports were of birds seen only at feeders by casual observers, it should be noted that virtually none of more than one hundred participants in the M.O.U. Spring Field Trip submitted details for the Western Tanager seen in Crow Wing County. Neighboring states and provinces also experienced an influx, albeit fewer in number: North Dakota (2), southeastern Manitoba (2), Thunder Cape Bird Observatory in Ontario (2), Michigan (2), Wisconsin (3), with none in Iowa (*N.A.S. Field Notes* 49(3), 1995).

The **Black-headed Grosbeak** in Clay County and the **Painted Bunting** in Anoka County were both transients at feeders and did not tarry. Several unexpected passerines were found in the northeast region in late May; in addition to the shrike in Two Harbors, **Lark Sparrow** was found in three locations along the North Shore, a **Grasshopper Sparrow** was one of the very few ever found in Duluth, and two **Orchard Orioles** were reported. **Henslow's Sparrow** was not reported from its last stronghold at O. L. Kipp State Park.

Weather Summary: March 1995 was mild with few major snowfalls. An early April surge of cold resulted in a record low of 5 degrees for the 4th in Minneapolis. A persistent series of "blocking highs" across northern Canada steered storms just south of Minnesota, resulting in below normal precipitation in the north and temperatures 4–6 degrees below normal across the state during April. This general pattern continued during May; only the Arrowhead received normal precipitation and temperatures. Flooding in the Mississippi River watershed was generally south of Minnesota and spring flooding in southern Manitoba apparently did not extend into northwestern Minnesota. Southwestern Minnesota

had slightly above normal precipitation in May but most of the state remained on the dry side, despite the heavy rains on the 13th. Outside of the Arrowhead region, May temperatures averaged 1–3 degrees cooler than normal for the month.

Acknowledgements: Dick Ruhme has announced his retirement from "The Season" after more than 16 years as a compiler. As previously noted in the Summer 1995 issue of ***The Loon***, Dick (along with Don Bolduc and the recently-retired Oscar Johnson) compiled the Fall 1978 Seasonal Report and began the team approach that continues to the present day. We thank him for these many years of dedicated service. As always, our thanks to Kim Eckert and Anthony Hertzel who continue to summarize reports called in to the M.O.U. "hotlines" and thanks to the many contributors to this seasonal summary of birdlife in Minnesota.

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 bold **(10/9)** indicate an occurrence either earlier, later or within the earliest or latest dates on file.
3. Counties listed in bold **(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.

The Season publishes reports of bird sightings from 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, request a report form from the Editor of *The Season*, Peder Svingen, 2602 East 4th St, Duluth, MN 55812.

Loons to Swans

Common Loon
Early south **3/14** Anoka PKL, 3/26 Hennepin, Kandiyohi, Olmsted and Washington mob; early north **3/23** St. Louis DBe, 3/27 Kanabec CM, 4/3 Otter Tail SDM.

Pied-billed Grebe
Early south **3/3** Olmsted CK, 3/11 Dakota PJ and Goodhue BL; early north 3/18 Douglas KKW, 3/19 Aitkin WN, 3/23 St. Louis DBe.

Horned Grebe
Early south 3/23 Dakota RG, 3/29 Ramsey KB and Lincoln RJ; early north 4/5 Kanabec CM, 4/17 Douglas SW, 4/19 Aitkin WN.

Red-necked Grebe
Early south **3/30** Anoka KB and Hennepin PJ, DN, 3/31 Olmsted CK; early north 4/10 Clay RO, 4/11 Cass SM/CE, 4/16 Becker BBe, Duluth AH and Todd JSK.

Eared Grebe
Early south 4/22 Lac Qui Parle TEB, JW and Rice FKS, 4/25 Carver MB; early north 4/26 Marshall SKS, 4/30 Clay RO, 5/5 Becker MN.

Western Grebe
Early south 4/21 Kandiyohi RF/JC, 4/23 Big Stone, Dakota, Lac Qui Parle and Sibley mob; early north 4/22 Traverse KB, 5/5 Clay CF, 5/21 Clearwater DJ.

American White Pelican
Overwintered Dakota PJ; early south **3/**

24 Rock WM, 4/2 Cottonwood ED, Goodhue RG and Kandiyohi RF/JC; early north 4/11 Cass SM/CE, 4/15 Otter Tail SDM, 4/16 Todd JSK; peak 4/23 Crow Wing (250) WL.

Double-crested Cormorant
Overwintered Dakota PJ; early south **3/5** (earliest date on record) Hennepin SK, **3/18** Olmsted DBS, 3/22 Ramsey KB; early north **3/30** Pennington SKS, **4/2** Grant SDM, 4/9 Douglas SW; peak 4/23 Crow Wing and Mille Lacs (500+) WL.

American Bittern
Early south 4/26 Hennepin TT, 4/29 Olmsted CK, 4/30 Cottonwood ED; early north **3/19** (earliest date on record) Becker BBe, 4/19 Aitkin WN, 4/22 Mille Lacs PJ.

Least Bittern
Only reports 5/25 Anoka KB and 5/31 Kandiyohi RF/JC.

Great Blue Heron
Early south 3/11 Hennepin SC and Ramsey BL, 3/12 Dakota, Rice, Scott and Winona mob; early north 3/18 Aitkin WN and St. Louis DBe, 3/19 Otter Tail SDM.

Great Egret
Early south **3/22** Ramsey KB, 3/26 Kandiyohi RF/JC, 3/30 Washington WL; early north 4/1 Otter Tail SDM, 4/6 **Koochiching** VE, 4/13 Kanabec CM.

Snowy Egret
Only report 5/6 Big Stone KB.

Little Blue Heron
Only report 5/12 Hennepin *fide* AH.

Cattle Egret
All reports: **4/7** (second earliest date on record) Olmsted (1) CK, 4/21–27 Nobles (1) ND, 4/29 Lac Qui Parle (1) BL and 5/2 (2) DL, 5/16 Ramsey (2) RH, 5/25 Kandiyohi (several) *fide* RF, 5/31 Grant (number?) SDM.

Green Heron
Early south 5/4 Washington DZ, 5/6 Hennepin PJ, 5/7 Watonwan RB; early north 4/30 Norman BK, 5/4 St. Louis AE, 5/5 Kanabec CM.

Black-crowned Night-Heron
Early south 4/1 Hennepin SC, 4/7 Olmsted CK, 4/12 Dakota SK; early north 4/16 Otter Tail SDM, 4/26 Marshall SKS, 5/28 Clearwater SKS.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron
Only reports 4/29 Hennepin County RA, 5/? Ramsey JLe.

WHITE IBIS
First state record; reported 5/13 Prairie Island, Winona County (along the Mississippi River) HT, CS, mob (***The Loon*** 67:71–72).

Tundra Swan
Early south **3/2** Wright (overwintered?) KB, 3/11 Wabasha CK, JSt; early north **3/16** Todd JSK, **3/18** Aitkin WN, Douglas and Grant KKW; late south 4/25 Washington WL, 4/29 Hennepin SK; late north 5/6 Aitkin WN, 5/28 Clearwater AB.

[TRUMPETER SWAN]
Overwintered in Olmsted (2) JW and Sherburne DO; also reported 3/13 Becker BBe, 3/16 Cass SM/CE, 3/18 Hennepin CS, 5/6 Cass MN, 5/10 Clay (3) RO.

Mute Swan
Reported 4/2 Dakota SK.

Waterfowl

Greater White-fronted Goose
Early south 3/11 Dakota County PJ, 3/12 Kandiyohi County RF/JC; early north **3/14–16 Duluth** (max. 14) *fide* KE, 3/31 Clearwater DJ; late south 4/16 Fillmore AB and Traverse PJ; late north 4/14 **Cook** (4) KMH; peak 3/12 Dakota (22) TT.

Snow Goose
Overwintered Dakota PJ; early south **3/1** Olmsted CK, 3/12 Hennepin PJ and McLeod RB; early north **3/12** St. Louis SW/MS, **3/16** Carlton LW and Cook OSL;

late south 5/2 Blue Earth MF, 5/13 Lac Qui Parle MB; late north 5/6 Roseau PS, **5/27** St. Louis DN.

Ross' Goose
Reported **3/16 Duluth** (2) DE (***The Loon*** 67:108), 4/4–13 Goodhue (1) mob, 4/6 Rock (1) RJ, **5/28 Duluth** (1) KE.

Canada Goose
Reported from 30 south and 26 north counties.

Wood Duck
Early south **3/1** Goodhue DBS, Mower RRK and Olmsted counties CK (overwintered?); early north 3/13 Becker BBe, 3/15 Otter Tail SDM, 3/18 Aitkin WN and Clay CF.

Green-winged Teal
Overwintered Dakota PJ; early south **3/1** Olmsted CK (overwintered?), 3/4 Rice TB, 3/13 Winona DBe, CS; early north **3/15** Otter Tail SDM, 4/1 Douglas SW, 4/8 Traverse CF.

American Black Duck
Overwintered in many areas; early north 3/22 Otter Tail SDM, 3/25 Kanabec CM, 4/19 St. Louis AE.

Mallard
Reported from 31 south and 23 north counties.

Northern Pintail
Early south 3/1 Rice RG, 3/11 Olmsted CK and Scott PJ; early north 3/12 Todd SDM, 3/14 Cook KMH, 3/30 Wilkin KKW.

Blue-winged Teal
Early south 3/12 Dakota PJ and Lyon HK, 3/14 Winona CS; early north 3/30 Otter Tail KKW, 4/6 St. Louis AE, 4/8 Polk SKS.

Cinnamon Teal
Reported **3/31** Otter Tail HD, 4/14 Lincoln *fide* AH, 4/21 Big Stone *fide* AH. An apparent hybrid CinnamonXBlue-winged Teal 4/22 Lac Qui Parle KR *et al.* (***The Loon*** 67:179).

Northern Shoveler
Early south 3/10 Olmsted CK, 3/11 Dakota mob and Rice TB, TF; early north **3/18** Douglas KKW, **3/22** Otter Tail SDM, **3/25** Clay CF.

Gadwall
Early south 3/1 Goodhue and Wabasha DBS, 3/2 Wright KB; early north **3/15** Otter Tail SDM, 3/22 Grant KKW, 4/1 Douglas SW.

American Wigeon
Early south 3/10 Cottonwood ED and Rice OR, FKS, 3/11 Dakota, Goodhue, Olmsted and Scott mob; early north 3/14 Cook KMH, 3/19 Otter Tail SDM, 4/1 Douglas KKW. An apparent hybrid EurasianXAmerican Wigeon was reported 4/7–8 Dakota TEB, BF.

Canvasback
Early south 3/2 Rice FKS, 3/3 Dakota PJ, 3/4 Scott RH; early north 3/18 Grant KKW, 3/19 Otter Tail SDM, 3/21 Beltrami DJ.

Redhead
Early south 3/3 Dakota PJ and Scott RG, 3/10 Rice OR, FKS; early north 3/19 Otter Tail SDM, 3/25 Clay CF, 3/27 Beltrami DJ.

Ring-necked Duck
Early south 3/9 Dakota RG, 3/10 Cottonwood ED and Rice TB, OR; early north **3/15** Otter Tail SDM, 3/17 Douglas KKW and St. Louis AE.

Greater Scaup
Early south **3/3** Scott RG, 3/11 Dakota PJ, 3/23 Olmsted CK; early north 4/16 Aitkin CB, 4/17 Marshall SKS, 4/26 St. Louis AE.

Lesser Scaup
Early south 3/1 Rice FKS and Winona CS, 3/2 Sherburne KB; early north **3/8** St. Louis KB, 3/13 Becker BBe, 3/15 Otter Tail SDM.

Harlequin Duck
Reported through 3/15 St. Louis (overwintered) *fide* KE, **4/16** Hennepin DBS.

Oldsquaw (with Mallard), 24 March 1995, Lake Harriet, Minneapolis. Photo by Don Bolduc.

Oldsquaw
Reported 3/14 Sherburne (overwintered?) KB and 3/24 Hennepin (Lake Harriet) AB.

Surf Scoter
Reported 5/9–10 Hennepin County (one female, Lake Calhoun) SC, mob.

Common Goldeneye
Late south 4/23 Big Stone JW, 5/3 Ramsey KB, 5/10 Hennepin SC, OJ.

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE
Reported through 3/13 Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co. BF, PJ, AH and through 3/24 Pigs Eye Lake, Ramsey Co. (adult male) KB. This same individual had overwintered in area (***The Loon*** 67:145).

Bufflehead
Early south **3/2** Wright KB, **3/3** Scott (overwintered?) RG, 3/11 Wabasha BL; early north **3/12** Koochiching SLM, 3/19 Douglas SW, 3/23 Kanabec CM.

Hooded Merganser
Early south **3/3** Dakota (overwintered?) PJ and Winona CS, 3/10 Cottonwood ED; early north 3/8 St. Louis KB, 3/12 Aitkin CB, 3/18 Pine CM, AH.

Common Merganser
Late south 4/26 Anoka PKL and Hennepin OJ, 5/4 Ramsey (peak 310) KB, 5/9 Dakota SD.

Red-breasted Merganser
Early south **3/4** Cottonwood ED, 3/11 Murray ND, 3/17 Dakota PJ and Olmsted CK; early north **3/24** Pine CM, 4/6 Cass SM/CE, 4/7 Otter Tail SDM.

Ruddy Duck
Early south 3/11 Winona BL, 3/12 Dakota RG, PJ and Hennepin RJ; early north **3/22** Otter Tail SDM, 4/22 Becker CF, Clay RO and Todd JSK.

Vultures to Falcons

Turkey Vulture
Early south 3/16 Hennepin AB, 3/18 Goodhue PJ, 3/21 Lyon HK; early north 4/2 Carlton LW, 4/3 St. Louis TW, 4/7 Becker BBe.

Osprey
Early south 3/26 Rice OR, 3/30 Carver

MB and Nicollet BB; early north **3/23** Aitkin CB, 4/1 Pennington SKS, 4/8 Pine SD.

Bald Eagle
Reported from 29 south and 19 north counties.

Northern Harrier
Early south 3/1 Dakota SK, 3/3 Houston EMF, 3/4 Murray ND; early north 3/13 Otter Tail SDM and St. Louis TW, 3/16 Todd JSK.

Sharp-shinned Hawk
Early south **3/3** Sherburne KB, 3/5 Cottonwood ED and Dakota PJ; early north **3/5** Koochiching KB, TT, 3/18 Aitkin CB, Clay CF and Otter Tail BBe.

Cooper's Hawk
Early south 3/8 Hennepin SC, 3/11 Martin BB, 3/12 Dakota PJ, TT; early north **3/19** Aitkin CB, 4/5 Otter Tail SDM, 4/9 Douglas SW.

Northern Goshawk
Late south 3/11 Hennepin RJ, 3/16 Dakota SK, 4/15 Olmsted CK.

Red-shouldered Hawk
Early south 3/11 Dakota PJ and Wabasha CK, 3/12 Carver RB; early north 3/15 Otter Tail SDM, 3/16 Becker BBe, 4/23 Clay RO. Total of eight locations (one nest) in Mahnomen MCBS.

Broad-winged Hawk
Early south 4/16 Olmsted AB, 4/19 Hennepin DB, 4/22 Dakota DZ and Rice TB; early north 4/5 Hubbard HJF, 4/23 St. Louis AE, 4/24 Aitkin CB.

Swainson's Hawk
Early south **3/15** (earliest date on record) Olmsted CK, 4/20 Washington TEB, 4/21 Big Stone JW, 4/23 Lac Qui Parle and Swift mob; only north report 5/6 Traverse KB.

Red-tailed Hawk
Reported from 35 south and 21 north counties.

Ferruginous Hawk
Only reports 4/22 Lac Qui Parle AB, DB, OJ and 4/23 Yellow Medicine DBM.

Rough-legged Hawk
Late south 4/26 Dakota TT, 4/28 Lincoln RJ, 4/29 Lac Qui Parle DBS; late north 5/9 Mahnomen MCBS, 5/20 St. Louis DBe, AE, 5/22 Wilkin KB.

Golden Eagle
Only reports 3/1 Otter Tail SDM, Winona (overwintered) CS, 3/4 Pine AH, 4/1 Grant SDM, 4/23 Lac Qui Parle DBM.

American Kestrel
Early north **3/2** Roseau SKS, 3/11 Morrison TS/JB, 3/12 Aitkin WN, Becker BBe, Carlton SDM and Itasca DS.

Merlin
Early south 3/17 Chisago RG, 3/24 Pipestone EG, 3/29 Hennepin RH; early north **3/13** Carlton LW, **3/15** St. Louis DBe, **3/19** Cook KMH.

Prairie Falcon
Overwintered Hennepin through 3/13 *fide* AH; also reported 3/23 Norman DM, 4/22 Traverse TBr.

Peregrine Falcon
Overwintered Ramsey KB and Hennepin TT; early south 3/10 Olmsted CK, 3/15 Dakota PJ, 3/19 Martin BB; early north 4/16 Traverse PJ, 4/19 St. Louis TW, 4/30 Clearwater DJ. Minimum total of 23 birds from 17 counties.

Partridge to Cranes

Gray Partridge
Reported from 12 south and three north counties. Numbers down mob.

Ring-necked Pheasant
Reported from 28 south and seven north counties. Numbers up in north counties.

Spruce Grouse
All reports: 3/19 Koochiching SD, 4/13 Lake RG, Cook OSL (no date).

Ruffed Grouse
Reported from 11 south and 20 north counties.

Greater Prairie-Chicken
All reports: 3/19–5/28 Wilkin SDM, mob, 3/21–5/28 Polk MCBS, AB, 4/21–22 Clay MN, SKS.

Sharp-tailed Grouse
Number of reports up from last year; 18 reports from Aitkin, Kittson, Pine, Polk, Roseau, and St. Louis counties.

Wild Turkey
Reported from 15 south counties. Number of reports up from last year.

Northern Bobwhite
Only report: 4/28 Houston DS.

Yellow Rail
More reports than last year; reported from Aitkin, Becker, Cass, Clay, Clearwater, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen, Polk, Roseau, and St. Louis counties north; also reported 5/7–20 Kandiyohi (max. four on 5/10) RF/JC.

Virginia Rail
Early south **4/14** (third earliest date on record) **Winona CS, 4/15** Washington PM, 4/19 Olmsted CK; early north 4/26 Kanabec CM, 5/1 Clay RO, 5/7 Polk MCBS.

Sora
Early south 4/18 Kandiyohi RF/JC, 4/22 Lac Qui Parle AB, 4/23 Washington TEB; early north 4/23 Kanabec CM, 4/30 Douglas SW, 5/1 Clay RO.

Common Moorhen
All reports: **4/25 Carver MB, 4/28** Hennepin TT, 5/7–14 Winona CS, JW. Number of reports down from last year.

American Coot
Reported from 36 south and 15 north counties; early south 3/11 Dakota RG, Martin BB and Olmsted CK; early north 3/13 (earliest north date on record) Marshall SKS, **3/15** Otter Tail (overwintered?) SDM, **3/18** Grant KKW.

Sandhill Crane
Reported from 14 south and 18 north counties; early south **3/14** (ties record early date) Chisago RG, **3/15** Anoka KB, 3/29 Lincoln RG; early north 3/18 Aitkin WN and Crow Wing SD, **3/19** Kanabec CM.

Shorebirds

Black-bellied Plover
Early south 4/30 Lyon AB, 5/7 Hennepin KB; only reports north 5/20 Aitkin DB and St. Louis WM, 5/21 Clearwater DJ, Roseau PS (no date).

American Golden-Plover
All reports: 4/29 Yellow Medicine (6) TT, 4/30 Cottonwood (7) ED and Lyon AB, 5/6 Lac Qui Parle TEB and Traverse KB, 5/7 Brown JW, 5/9 Hennepin OJ, 5/13 Dakota (20) DBS, 5/29 Wabasha (5) BL.

Semipalmated Plover
Early south 4/22 Lac Qui Parle MB, 5/6 Mower JM and Traverse KB; early north **4/22** Clearwater DJ, 5/6 Beltrami and Roseau PS.

Piping Plover
Only report 5/6 Lac Qui Parle KB. Nine reports last year.

Killdeer
Early south 3/8 Olmsted, 3/10 Dakota SK, 3/11 Martin BB; early north 3/15 Becker BBe, 3/15 Otter Tail SDM, 3/17 Clay CF.

American Avocet
All reports: 4/22 Big Stone (1) *fide* AH, 4/28 Pipestone (2–3) ND, JP, 4/29 Olmsted (2) mob, 4/29 Mower (1) RRK, 4/30 Douglas (7) SW.

Greater Yellowlegs
Early south 3/26 Kandiyohi RF/JC, 4/8 Lincoln PJ and McLeod DN; early north 4/15 Douglas SW, 4/22 Clay CF, 4/22 Aitkin WN.

Lesser Yellowlegs
Early south 3/29 Anoka PKL, 3/30 Mower RRK and Pipestone JP; early north 4/17 Douglas SW and Kanabec CM, 4/23 Todd JSK.

Solitary Sandpiper
Early south **4/9** (third earliest date on record) Dakota TT, 4/16 Mower AB, 4/22 Lac Qui Parle MF; early north **4/26** Kanabec CM, 5/4 Clay RO, 5/6 Beltrami PS.

Willet
Over 80 birds reported from 15 counties with migration peak 4/28–29; maximum count 35 in Lac Qui Parle TT. Early south 4/27 Le Sueur RG; early north 5/4 Lake RJ.

Spotted Sandpiper
Early south 4/16 Winona CS, 4/27 Washington JF, 4/28 Olmsted CK; early north 5/4 Carlton RJ, 5/6 Becker BK and Itasca BN.

Upland Sandpiper
Early south 4/28 Pipestone RJ, 4/30 Lac Qui Parle TT and Lincoln AB; early north **4/20** Aitkin KB, 5/10 Clay RO and St. Louis SS.

Whimbrel
All reports: 5/20–29 St. Louis mob, 5/21 **Clearwater** (4) DJ, 5/23 Cook (10–12) SM/CE.

Hudsonian Godwit
Early south 5/12 Faribault RG, 5/16 Mower RRK, 5/19 McLeod RJ; early north 5/1 Clay SLM, 5/14 Clay RO, 5/16 Polk SKS.

Marbled Godwit
Early south 4/15 Olmsted CK and Lac Qui Parle DO, 5/22 Anoka (24) KB; early north 4/13 Wilkin SDM, 4/17 Pennington SKS, 4/21 Clay MN.

Ruddy Turnstone
Early south 5/13 Le Sueur PS, 5/19 Mower JM, 5/20 Big Stone KB; early north 5/11 Cass SM/CE, 5/20 St. Louis CM, 5/21 Clearwater DJ.

Red Knot
All reports: **5/20** St. Louis (1) mob, **5/21** Clearwater (1) DJ, 5/26 Anoka (1) RG, 5/31 Cass (2) SM/CE.

Sanderling
All reports: south 5/6 Lac Qui Parle KB, 5/15 Olmsted CK, 5/20 Winona CS, 5/26 Le Sueur RJ; north 5/27 St. Louis TEB, 5/28 Lake SW/MS, 5/29 Aitkin KB.

Semipalmated Sandpiper
Early south 4/23 Lyon JSt, 4/28 Olmsted CK, 5/6 Hennepin OJ; early north 5/12 Cass SM/CE, 5/21 Clearwater DJ, 5/23 Todd RJ; late south 5/29 Wabasha BL.

Least Sandpiper
Early south 5/6 Lac Qui Parle TEB, Nicollet JW and Sibley BL; early north 5/6 Beltrami PS, 5/7 Kanabec and Pine CM.

White-rumped Sandpiper
Early south 4/30 Carver CG, 5/9 Mower JM; only report north 5/28 Polk AB; peak migration 5/19–21.

Baird's Sandpiper
Early south 4/8 Le Sueur RG, 4/22 Lac Qui Parle PB, 4/29 McLeod TT; all reports north 5/8 Pennington SKS, 5/20 St. Louis PS.

Pectoral Sandpiper
Early south 4/1 Nobles RJ, 4/8 Goodhue BL, 4/23 Big Stone KB, OJ; all reports north 5/5 Kanabec CM, St. Louis DBe (no date).

Dunlin
Early south **4/9** (earliest date on record) Carver DBM, 4/16 Goodhue BF, 4/29 McLeod TT; early north 5/16 Cass SM/CE, 5/17 Polk SKS, 5/27 St. Louis DN.

Stilt Sandpiper
Early south 5/13 Dakota DBS and Mower JM, 5/20 Rice TB; all reports north **5/6** Roseau PS, 5/14 St. Louis PS.

Short-billed Dowitcher
Early south 4/30 Rock AB and Winona CS, 5/7 Hennepin SC; all reports north 5/14 Clay RO, 5/21 Clearwater DJ, 5/23 Becker MN, St. Louis PB (no date).

Long-billed Dowitcher
Early south 4/29 Olmsted CK, 4/30 Lincoln AB, 5/6 Big Stone KB; only report north 5/16 Polk SKS.

Common Snipe
Early south **3/18** Hennepin SC and Houston PJ, 3/25 Nobles JSt; early north 4/8 Pine SD, 4/9 Aitkin WN and Douglas SW.

American Woodcock
Early south 3/13 Washington WL, 3/16 Winona CS, 3/23 Morrison RG; early north **3/17** Kanabec CM, 3/27 Cook OSL, 4/7 Koochiching SLM.

Wilson's Phalarope
Early south 4/29 Yellow Medicine TT and Lac Qui Parle DBS, 5/13 Le Sueur PS; early north 5/6 Roseau (20) PS, 5/7 Douglas SW, 5/14 Clay RO.

Red-necked Phalarope
Early south 5/12 Faribault RG, RJ, 5/13 Dakota DBS; all north reports 5/16 Carlton RG, 5/28 Polk AB.

Jaegers to Terns

Jaeger species?
Reported 5/28 St. Louis MH.

Franklin's Gull
Early south 3/21 Le Sueur RG, 3/25 Lyon HK, 3/30 Dakota PB; early north 4/15 Douglas SW, 4/19 Otter Tail SDM, 4/21 Polk MCBS, 5/16 **Lake** RG.

Little Gull
Only report 5/10 Lake Calhoun, Hennepin SC (***The Loon*** 67:175–176).

Bonaparte's Gull
Early south **3/28** Goodhue BL, **3/29** Dakota DBS, 3/31 Rice TB; early north **4/2** Itasca BN, 4/19 Douglas KKW and Otter Tail SDM. Peak 2000 reported 4/27 Washington TEB (***The Loon*** 67:115–116).

Ring-billed Gull
Reported from 26 south and 22 north counties. Early south 3/3 Dakota mob; early north **3/12** Becker BBe.

Herring Gull
Reported from 15 south and 14 north counties. Early north **3/12–13** Koochiching SLM, GM.

Thayer's Gull
More reports (28 individuals) than previous years. Reported from Goodhue and Hennepin in south with 15 different individuals reported by KB from Twin Cities metro area. Only north report 4/3 Itasca BN.

ICELAND GULL
Reported 3/25–4/2 Colville Park, Goodhue Co. (first-winter) BF, mob (***The Loon*** 67:116–117), 3/29 Colville Park, Goodhue Co. (adult) KB (***The Loon*** 67:184–185), 4/7 Pine Bend landfill, Dakota Co. (first-winter) KB .

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL
Three different birds (4/9 third-summer, 4/17–20 adult, 4/19–28 third-summer) reported from Oak Grove Township, Anoka Co. KB (***The Loon*** 67:177–178). Another adult reported 4/17 Goodhue BL (***The Loon*** 67:183).

Glaucous Gull
All reports: 3/21 Dakota KB, 4/5 Anoka DB, 4/14 St. Louis TW.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL
Reported 3/27 Pigs Eye Lake, Ramsey Co. (adult) KB (***The Loon*** 67:181–182) and 3/27 St. Louis (first-winter) MH. The latter bird had been seen periodically since December (***The Loon*** 67:111–112 and 117–118).

Caspian Tern
Early south **4/20** Ramsey SK, 4/23 Stearns KB, 4/24 Washington TEB; early north

Third-year Lesser Black-backed Gull, 24 April 1995, Oak Grove Township, Anoka County. Photo by Karl Bardon.

4/20 Becker BBe, 5/3 Cass SM/CE, 5/5 Crow Wing CM.

Common Tern
Early south 4/28 Chippewa RH, 4/30 Cottonwood ED and Lincoln AB; early north **4/20** (earliest north date) Becker BBe, 4/29 Hubbard HJF, 5/7 St. Louis TW, 5/8 Mahnomen BK.

Forster's Tern
Early south 4/10 Rice TB, 4/15 Big Stone PJ, 4/19 Hennepin TT; early north 4/20 Becker BBe, 4/29 Pine CM, 4/30 Clay CF.

Black Tern
Early south 4/25 Todd CE, 5/2 Pipestone JP, 5/3 Ramsey KB, 5/6 Kandiyohi RF/JC; early north 5/6 Crow Wing DO, 5/7 Douglas SW and Otter Tail SDM.

Doves to Kingfishers

Rock Dove
Reported from 25 south and 18 north counties.

Mourning Dove
Reported from 27 south and 19 north counties.

Black-billed Cuckoo
Early south 5/9 Mower JM, 5/11 Olmsted AMP, 5/2–16 Wright DN; all reports north 5/29 Kanabec SDM, 5/29 Otter Tail SDM, St. Louis DBe (no date).

Yellow-billed Cuckoo
All reports: 5/18 Scott DZ, 5/29 Olmsted JSt and Houston FL.

Eastern Screech-Owl
Reported from Mower, Murray, Olmsted, Ramsey and Rice counties south; Grant and Todd counties north.

Great Horned Owl
Reported from 22 south and 17 north counties.

Snowy Owl
All reports: 3/12 Beltrami DJ and Morrison *fide* AH, 3/19 St. Louis TW.

BURROWING OWL
Only report 4/30 Co. Roads 13/73, Pipestone Co. AB.

Barred Owl
Reported from 15 south and 12 north counties.

Great Gray Owl
Nested in St. Louis mob; also seen in four other Sax-Zim Bog locations. Additional reports 3/28 Lake (2) CMa, 3/31–4/1 Lake DBM, WM, 4/27 Itasca DB, 5/9 Koochiching VE.

Long-eared Owl
More reports than usual; reported from Anoka, Blue Earth, Chisago, Cottonwood, Dakota, Hennepin, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Nobles, Rice and Rock counties south; Aitkin, Becker, Kanabec and Lake counties north.

Short-eared Owl
Reports up from last year with at least 14 individuals in Chisago, Cottonwood, Kandiyohi, Lac Qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, Rice, and Yellow Medicine counties south; plus Otter Tail Co. north. Peak migration dates 4/21–4/28.

Boreal Owl
Found at ten locations within Lake mob; also 3/11 and 3/21 Cook OSL.

Northern Saw-whet Owl
Reported south 3/9 Hennepin and 5/11 Dakota mob; also reported from six north counties. Unusual were the late February and March reports of 21 migrants or wintering birds in or near Duluth (four found dead in late March) *fide* KE.

Common Nighthawk
Early south 5/2 Washington DS, 5/6 Kandiyohi RF/JC, 5/8 Hennepin OJ; early north **4/26** Itasca BN, 5/19 Carlton LW, 5/20 Cass MN.

Whip-poor-will
All reports: south 4/28 Anoka PKL, 5/2 Houston EMF, 5/6 Winona CS, 5/16 Ramsey RH; north 5/12 Kanabec CM, 5/17 Cook OSL, 5/23 Cook KMH, 5/27 Roseau PS.

Chimney Swift
Early south 4/24 Ramsey TT, 4/28 Rice TB, 4/30 Brown AB; early north 5/2 Otter Tail SDM, 5/6 Aitkin WN, 5/7 Kanabec CM.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Early south 5/7 Houston EMF and Nicollet LF, 5/11 Carver WM; early north 5/12 Aitkin WN, Becker BK and Kanabec CM.

Belted Kingfisher
Early north 4/7 St. Louis NJ, 4/10 Clay RO, 4/18 Otter Tail KKW.

Woodpeckers and Flycatchers

Red-headed Woodpecker
Reported from 21 south and ten north counties.

Red-bellied Woodpecker
Reported from 23 south counties (31 last year) and Aitkin, Clay, Crow Wing, Kanabec, Mahnomen, Otter Tail and Todd counties north.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Early south 3/26 Brown JS, 3/30 Pipestone JP, 4/8 Houston JSt; early north **3/27** Cook OSL, 4/5 St. Louis AE, 4/16 Otter Tail SDM.

Downy Woodpecker
Reported from 27 south and 19 north counties.

Hairy Woodpecker
Reported from 25 south and 21 north counties.

Three-toed Woodpecker
All reports: 3/31 Lake (3) DBM, 5/14 St. Louis SS.

Black-backed Woodpecker
All reports: 3/3–4 Koochiching KB, TT, 3/

Short-eared Owl, 21 April 1995, Yellow Medicine County. Photo by Paul Budde.

10 St. Louis KB, 3/26 Cook OSL, 3/28 Lake (3) CMa, 3/31 Lake (6) DBM, 4/8 Lake AH, 5/20 Aitkin CB, 5/27 Roseau (2) PS, 5/29 Carlton (2) PS.

Northern Flicker
Early north **3/15** Cook OSL, 3/26 Koochiching GM, 4/1 Clay CF.

Pileated Woodpecker
Reported from 20 south and 19 north counties.

Olive–sided Flycatcher
Early south 5/10 Hennepin DB and Steele RJ, 5/14 Brown JS and Scott WM, SWe; early north 5/13 Aitkin WN, 5/14 Cook KMH and Grant SDM; late south 5/31 Anoka KB, Brown JS, Dakota DBS and Hennepin SC.

Eastern Wood-Pewee
Early south 5/7 Lyon HK, 5/9 Mower JM, 5/11 Rice JL and Winona AM; early north 5/17 Becker BK, 5/18 Clay MN, 5/24 St. Louis TEB.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
Early south 5/10 Houston JD, 5/16 Winona CS; early north 5/20 Aitkin WN, 5/22 Clearwater DJ; late south 5/31 Anoka KB, Brown JS and Hennepin SC.

Acadian Flycatcher
All reports: 5/17 Winona CS, 5/23 and 5/29 Goodhue KB, BL, 5/24 Houston FL, 5/27 Hennepin SC and Washington DZ, 5/29 Nicollet DN and Scott BF.

Alder Flycatcher
Early south **5/10** Dodge RJ, 5/17 Winona CS; early north 5/15 Carlton LW, 5/16 Kanabec CM, 5/17 Polk SKS; late south 5/24 Winona CS, 5/29 Hennepin SC.

Willow Flycatcher
Early south 5/6 Hennepin OJ, 5/10 Rice JL, 5/11 Olmsted CK; early north 5/28 Clay RO, 5/31 Polk MCBS.

Least Flycatcher
Early south 5/6 Brown JS, Cottonwood ED and Nicollet JW, 5/7 Hennepin SC, TT, Kandiyohi RF/JC, Olmsted CK, JSt and Sherburne WM; early north 5/7 Clay CF and Grant SDM, 5/10 Kanabec CM, 5/13 Aitkin CB and Cook KMH.

Eastern Phoebe
Early south 3/14 Houston EMF, 3/24 Pipestone WM, Rice TB, Washington DS and Winona CS; early north 4/2 Aitkin CB and Douglas SW, 4/8 Traverse CF, 4/10 Becker BBe and Clay RO.

Great Crested Flycatcher
Early south 5/8 Ramsey TT, 5/9 Mower JM; early north 5/14 Becker BBe and Carlton LW, 5/15 Kanabec CM.

Western Kingbird
Early south 5/17 Sherburne DO, 5/20 Big Stone DN, 5/26 Murray ND; early north 5/14 Clay RO, 5/18 Polk SKS. Peak number 5/27 Roseau (10) PS.

Eastern Kingbird
Early south 4/29 Houston DN, 5/4 Rice TB, 5/5 Houston EMF and Olmsted JSt; early north 5/7 Cass AB, 5/12 Becker BBe, 5/14 Aitkin CB, Clay RO and Grant SDM.

Larks to Ravens

Horned Lark
Reported from 31 south and 16 north counties.

Purple Martin
Early south 4/8 Wabasha BL, 4/14 Cottonwood ED, 4/15 Anoka SC, Dakota TT and Swift DO; early north 4/15 Becker BBe, 4/21 Aitkin CB and Otter Tail SDM.

Tree Swallow
Early south **3/14** Winona CS, **3/16** Anoka KB, SC, 3/26 Ramsey TT and Washington TEB, SD; early north 4/8 Todd JSK, 4/14 Becker BBe and Itasca TS/JB, 5/15 St. Louis SS.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Early south **4/7** Winona CS, 4/15 Hennepin DN, 4/16 Olmsted CK; early north

5/8 DKanabec CM, Norman BK and Polk SKS, 5/9 Beltrami DJ, 5/10 St. Louis AE.

Bank Swallow
Early south 4/16 Hennepin SC, 4/24 Ramsey TT and Rice TB, 4/25 Brown JS; early north 4/22 Aitkin PJ, 5/8 Polk SKS and St. Louis NJ, 5/10 Clay RO.

Cliff Swallow
Early south **4/15** Fillmore JSt and Swift DO, 4/28 Washington DN, 4/30 Lincoln AB; early north 4/28 Beltrami SM/CE and ST. Louis TW, 4/29 Aitkin WN and Pennington SKS, 4/30 Douglas SW.

Barn Swallow
Early south 4/11 Dakota SK, 4/13 Hennepin DB, 4/15 Brown JS, Lac Qui Parle DBS and Swift DO; early north **4/10** Otter Tail SDM, 4/20 Kanabec CM, 4/25 Todd JSK.

Gray Jay
Reported from ten north counties.

Blue Jay
Reported from 29 south and 24 north counties.

Black-billed Magpie
Reported from 14 counties within range, as far south as Wilkin SDM. One unusual report "mid-April" in Duluth *fide* KE.

American Crow
Reported from 30 south and 18 north counties.

Common Raven
Reported from 16 counties in the north; one south report from Anoka County (resident) KB, JH.

Chickadees to Gnacatchers

Black-capped Chickadee
Reported from 31 south and 28 north counties.

Boreal Chickadee
Reported from Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake and St. Louis counties.

Tufted Titmouse
All reports: 3/1–5/31 Houston EMF, mob, 3/1–5/31 Winona (two locations) CS, 3/15 and 5/12 Olmsted CK, JW, 4/22 Goodhue BL.

Red-breasted Nuthatch
Reported from 12 south and 15 north counties.

White-breasted Nuthatch
Reported from 29 south and 25 north counties.

Brown Creeper
Reported from 24 south and 17 north counties.

Carolina Wren
Two reports: one overwintered at a feeder in Northfield through 3/11 Rice MS *et al.*, 4/29 Winona CS.

House Wren
Early south 4/14 Cottonwood ED, 4/26 Brown JS and Hennepin DBM, 4/27 Rice TB; early north **4/16** Douglas SW, **4/25** Kanabec CM, 5/3 St. Louis AE.

Winter Wren
Early south 3/24 Rock WM, 3/29 Lincoln RG, RJ; early north 4/13 St. Louis SW/MS, TS/JB, 4/16 Itasca TS/JB, 4/19 Clay CF; late south 5/11 Hennepin SC, DZ and Ramsey KB, **5/20** Winona CS.

Sedge Wren
Early south 4/29 Winona CS, 5/3 Hennepin SC, 5/6 Lac Qui Parle KB and Rice TB; early north **5/3** Kanabec CM, 5/9 Polk MCBS, 5/10 Becker BBe and Clay MN, RO.

Marsh Wren
Early south 4/28 Hennepin TT, 5/6 Goodhue PB, RB, SWe, 5/7 Anoka WM and Kandiyohi RF/JC; early north 5/2 Cass SM/CE, 5/16 Polk MN, 5/20 St. Louis TW.

Golden-crowned Kinglet
Early north **3/11** Aitkin WN, 3/25 Clay CF, 4/1 Grant SDM; late south 5/2 Pipestone JP, 5/5 Brown JS, 5/6 Hennepin DB.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Early south 3/24 Hennepin WM, Mower JM and Pipestone JP, 3/25 Kandiyohi RF/JC; early north 4/9 Clay CF, 4/16 Becker BBe and St. Louis KB; late south **5/24** Anoka KB, **5/26** Pipestone JP.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Early south 4/25 Brown JS, 4/29 Fillmore DN, 5/1 Hennepin OJ; all north reports: **5/7** Kanabec CM, **5/7** and 5/29 Douglas SW, 5/14 Grant SDM, 5/21–27 Clay CF, 5/23 Todd (2) JSK, 5/29 Otter Tail SDM.

Bluebirds to Thrashers

Eastern Bluebird
Early south 3/4 Dakota OR, 3/11 Wright RJ, 3/12 Brown JS, Mower RRK and Rice OR; early north 3/15 Grant SDM, 3/16 Aitkin WN and Kanabec CM, 3/17 Clay CF and Otter Tail KKW.

Mountain Bluebird
Two reports: **3/12**–4/2 Washington (male) JF, mob, **4/19** (late south migrant) McLeod (female) RG.

Townsend's Solitaire
All reports: 1/28–3/25 Duluth, St. Louis Co. *fide* KE, 1/7–4/3 Hennepin JDa, mob, 4/4–16 Aurora, St. Louis ABo *et al.*, 4/8 Lake AH, 4/19 Washington DN, **4/27–30** Anoka (2) *fide* AH, **4/30** Brown JS.

Veery
Early south 5/7 Scott SK, 5/8 Anoka KB, 5/9 Brown JS and Lyon HK; early north 5/10 Carlton LW, 5/13 Beltrami DJ, Marshall SKS and St. Louis NJ, 5/16 Aitkin CB.

Gray-cheeked Thrush
Early south 5/4 Anoka KB, 5/5 Hennepin DJe; early north 5/7 Clay CF, 5/14 Grant SDM, 5/19 Itasca BN; late south 5/23 Brown JS, 5/28 Hennepin SC, TT.

Swainson's Thrush
Early south 4/30 Cottonwood ED, 5/3 Brown JS; early north **4/20** Carlton SW/MS, 4/28 St. Louis AE, 4/29 Aitkin WN; late south 5/29 Brown JS and Hennepin SC, 5/31 McLeod RJ.

Hermit Thrush
Early south 3/25 Kandiyohi RF/JC, 3/29 Lincoln RG, RJ; early north 4/15 Clay RO, 4/16 Carlton LW and Otter Tail SDM, 4/18 St. Louis AE; late south 5/11 Hennepin SC, 5/15 Nicollet LF.

Wood Thrush
Early south 4/26 Ramsey RH, 5/3 Hennepin OJ and Rice JL, 5/4 Anoka KB; early north 5/13 Crow Wing DO, 5/14 Carlton LW and Douglas SW, 5/18 Cook KMH.

American Robin
Reported from 27 south and 25 north counties.

Varied Thrush
All reports: Nov.–3/16 Crow Wing *fide* JBl, Nov.–mid-March Clay WMS, 12/17–3/18 Aitkin AP, Jan.–3/4 Hennepin mob, 1/17–3/18 Grand Marais, Cook Co. MP, Jan.–3/14 Colville, Cook Co. TM, 2/1–3/14 Lutsen, Cook Co. FJ, 3/7 Grand Marais area, Cook Co. JLu, 3/29–4/13 Becker *fide* BBe, 4/6 Duluth, St. Louis Co. KE, 4/28 Ramsey AH, **5/8** Rice JBa. The five new reports in spring brought the 1994–95 (July–June) total to **41** individuals, more than double any previous year (***The Loon*** 67:129–136).

Gray Catbird
Early south 4/23 Cottonwood ED, 4/29 Rice TB, 5/3 Dakota SK; early north 5/10 Kanabec CM, 5/12 Todd JSK, 5/13 Becker BBe. One **overwintered** through 3/1 Hennepin RJ.

Northern Mockingbird
All reports: **3/12** Duluth SDM, **4/30** Clearwater SS, 5/3 Hennepin JPo, 5/16

Was the Carolina Parakeet a Minnesota Bird?

Walter Breckenridge

Several years ago, I painted a series of pictures of some of our extinct birds, among which was the Carolina Parakeet *(Conuropsis carolinensis).* I recently undertook writing a few paragraphs about these paintings, and in discussing this brilliant little parakeet I delved into numerous publications. Some of these stirred my curiosity about why Dr. Roberts had not included it in the *Birds of Minnesota* as a possible resident or at least a visitor to our state.

Arthur C. Bent's well-known series of volumes on the *Life Histories of North American Birds* contains 14 pages of discussions about this bird. In probing his data on the original range of this species, I was surprised to find an accepted record at Spirit Lake, Iowa. This lake almost touches Minnesota's southern border.

Alexander Wilson, who had extensive contact with this bird in the early 1800s, stated in his *American Ornithology* on the food of the parakeet that "food which the Paroquit prefers to all others is the seed of the Cacklebur." Further, he stated, "To a Paroquit which I wounded and kept for a considerable time I offered apples, it uniformly rejected but burs and beech nuts, never." Ownbey and Morley's *Vascular Plants of Minnesota* shows the Cocklebur found throughout the southern half of Minnesota. Bent quotes early observers as finding the bird present "under snowy wintry conditions along the Ohio." All these bits of evidence convince me that there would be little doubt that the birds did occur in Minnesota in early years.

I was further surprised to find that this bird was extremely abundant in the agricultural south central states and that its feeding habits made it an extremely destructive pest to farmers and fruit raisers. The extent of the destruction of these birds by pioneer farmers probably had its populations dropping off rapidly by the time our early ornithologists came on the scene and failed to report its possible presence in our state. The Carolina Parakeet made its last stand in the interior in Arkansas and Oklahoma, but by 1890 it was practically gone from these localities. The last bird reported from the interior was a single individual seen near Chicago on 11 June, 1912. This may have been an escaped cage bird. The last individuals of the species were reported in Florida in 1920. The following quotes from Bent may surprise the many who have regretted its extinction:

> "It was a bad actor . . . Consequently, it was slaughtered in enormous numbers on every opportunity. It was more or less hunted as a game bird, for it was abundant and its flesh was said to be very palatable. It was shot in enormous numbers for mere sport or for practice. Hundreds were captured by professional bird catchers and sent north as cage birds or pets and many were killed for their plumage. Furthermore, it has always retreated before the spread of civilization and seemed incapable of surviving in settled regions."

8840 West River Road N., Minneapolis, MN 55444.


BRECKENRIDGE '85

Mountain Bluebird, Grey Cloud Island, Washington County. Photo by Terence P. Brashear.

Douglas PKL, 5/22 Murray ND, 5/23 Hubbard DJ.

Brown Thrasher
Early south 4/15 Rice TB, 4/16 Cottonwood ED, 4/17 Olmsted CK; early north 5/2 Carlton LW and Kanabec CM, 5/3 St. Louis ME, SS, 5/5 Otter Tail SDM.

Pipits to Vireos

American Pipit
All reports: 4/30 Lincoln AB, 5/6 Big Stone KB, 5/7 Dakota SK, 5/9 Mower JM, 5/20 St. Louis SS, PS, **5/22** Anoka KB, **5/27** St. Louis DN.

SPRAGUE'S PIPIT
One heard singing 5/31 Polk MCBS.

Bohemian Waxwing
Reported from eight north counties; late north 4/1 Koochiching GM, 4/21 Carlton LW, **5/24** (latest date on record) Ely, St. Louis Co. SS.

Cedar Waxwing
Reported from 17 south and 12 north counties.

Northern Shrike
Late south 4/14 Anoka RG, PKL, **4/17** Mower JM, **4/22** (latest south date on record) Lac Qui Parle FE; late north 4/9 Aitkin WN and Douglas SW, 4/14 St. Louis KB, 4/19 Kanabec CM.

Loggerhead Shrike
Early south 3/12 Dakota TT and Lyon HK, 3/24 Martin DBM, 3/26 Anoka PKL; early north 3/25 Pine DW, 4/22 Marshall RJ, 4/29 Clay CF. Also 5/22 **Lake** KE, PS. A minimum of **42** birds reported from **27** (four north and 23 south) counties.

European Starling
Reported from 25 south and 21 north counties.

WHITE-EYED VIREO
Two reports, possibly involving the same individual: 5/12–15 Minnesota River Valley N.W.R. Headquarters, Hennepin TT, mob, 5/29 Old Cedar Avenue Bridge, Hennepin SC (***The Loon*** 67:178–179).

Bell's Vireo
All reports: 5/19–23 Winona CS, FL, 5/27 Olmsted CK, JSt, Dakota (no date) PB.

Solitary Vireo
Early south 5/5 Hennepin SC, 5/6 Mower RRK, Renville JW and Rice TB; early north 5/4 Kanabec CM, 5/7 Cass AB, 5/10 Morrison SDM; late south 5/28 Hennepin SC, PJ, 5/31 Anoka KB.

Yellow-throated Vireo
Early south **4/21** (ties second earliest date on record) Renville DBM, 5/7 Dakota TT and Hennepin SC, 5/9 Winona CS; early north 5/12 Kanabec CM, 5/14 Becker BBe and Douglas SW, 5/16 Carlton LW.

Warbling Vireo
Early south 5/5 Winona CS, 5/7 Hennepin TT and Mower JM, 5/8 Rice TB; early north **5/6** Roseau PS, 5/13 St. Louis AE, 5/14 Becker BBe and Grant SDM.

Philadelphia Vireo
Early south **5/6** Dakota RH, 5/7 Winona CS; early north 5/18 St. Louis AE, 5/20 Aitkin mob and Itasca BN, 5/23 Cook KMH; late south 5/28 Hennepin SC, 5/29 Nicollet PJ, DN and Ramsey TT.

Red-eyed Vireo
Early south 5/7 Rice TB, 5/11 Winona AM, CS, 5/12 Ramsey DJe; early north 5/14 Clay RO, 5/15 Douglas SW, 5/17 Aitkin WN.

Warblers

Blue-winged Warbler
Early south 5/1 Winona CS, 5/7 Hennepin TT and Scott SK; one north report 5/28 Otter Tail SDM.

Golden-winged Warbler
Early south 5/6 Winona CS, 5/8 Olmsted CK, 5/9 Hennepin SC, Nicollet MF and

Rice TB; early north 5/14 Aitkin CB and Kanabec CM, 5/15 Becker BBe, 5/18 St. Louis AE.

Tennessee Warbler
Early south 4/29 Winona AM, 5/7 Hennepin TT and Lac Qui Parle RB; early north **5/1** Clay SLM, 5/7 Cass AB and Kanabec CM; late south 5/31 Anoka KB, Hennepin JBe, PJ and McLeod RJ.

Orange-crowned Warbler
Early south **4/15** (second earliest date on record) Kandiyohi RF/JC, 4/23 Rice JL; early north 4/29 Clay CF, RO and Kanabec CM, 5/7 Morrison AB; late south **5/24** Anoka KB and Washington AB, **5/25** Hennepin SC; late north 5/23 Clay CF, **5/27** Roseau PS.

Nashville Warbler
Early south 5/1 Hennepin SC, 5/3 Winona CS; early north 5/5 St. Louis DBe, 5/7 Aitkin CB, Grant SDM and Morrison AB; late south 5/26 Pipestone JP and Ramsey KB, 5/29 Hennepin SC.

Northern Parula
Early south 5/6 Goodhue PB, 5/7 Hennepin TT; early north **5/1** Beltrami DJ, **5/6** Pine DW, 5/14 Aitkin CB and Becker BBe; late south 5/23 Goodhue KB, 5/24 Hennepin SC.

Yellow Warbler
Early south 4/29 Houston DN, 5/1 Winona AM, CS, 5/2 Hennepin SC, SK; early north 5/7 Douglas SW, 5/9 Kanabec CM and Polk MCBS, 5/10 Becker BBe and Clay RO.

Chestnut-sided Warbler
Early south 5/8 Hennepin TT and Rice TB, 5/9 Mower JM; early north 5/12 Cass MN, 5/13 Beltrami SM/CE, Carlton LW and Pennington SKS; late south 5/26 Brown JS, 5/29 Hennepin SC and Nicollet DN.

Magnolia Warbler
Early south 5/8 Olmsted CK, 5/9 Hennepin SC, Mower RRK, JM and Rice TB; early north 5/11 St. Louis AE, 5/13 Kanabec CM, 5/14 Clay RO and Aitkin CB; late south 5/29 Nicollet PJ, DN, 5/31 Brown JS and Hennepin JBe, SC.

Cape May Warbler
Early south 5/7 Winona CS, 5/8 Rice TB; early north **5/7** Kanabec CM, 5/13 Marshall SKS and St. Louis AE; late south 5/21 Hennepin SC, 5/22 Anoka KB.

Black-throated Blue Warbler
All reports: 5/10–11 Winona CS, AM, 5/12–15 Hennepin TT, mob, **5/19–25** Cook KMH, SM/CE, 5/22–27 Lake PS, DN, 5/28–29 Duluth, St. Louis Co. mob, 5/29 Carlton SB.

Yellow-rumped Warbler
Early south 4/1 Jackson RG, RJ, 4/5 Cottonwood ED; early north 4/13 Polk SKS, 4/14 Cook KMH; late south 5/24 Anoka KB, 5/27 Hennepin TT. One present since at least 2/8 (see winter season) remained through 3/18 Hennepin EGS, SC.

Black-throated Green Warbler
Early south 5/15 Anoka KB, 5/16 Rice TB; early north 5/7 Douglas SW, 5/10 Morrison SDM, 5/12 St. Louis SW/MS; late south 5/26 Ramsey KB, 5/29 Hennepin SC.

Blackburnian Warbler
Early south 5/7 Hennepin TT, 5/8 Rice TB; early north 5/10 Becker BBe, 5/13 Beltrami DJ, Marshall SKS and St. Louis AE; late south **5/27** Kandiyohi KB, **5/31** McLeod RJ.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER
Reported 5/18 into summer, Sibley State Park, Kandiyohi Co. RF/JC, mob. This singing male was undoubtedly the same individual seen here in 1994.

Pine Warbler
Early south **4/15** (ties second earliest date on record) Kandiyohi RF/JC, 4/26 Dakota TT, 4/28 Anoka KB; early north 4/26 Becker BBe, 4/29 Aitkin WN, 5/3 Beltrami DJ.

Palm Warbler
Early south **3/31** (earliest date on record by ten days!) Cottonwood EEG, 4/25 Ramsey RH, 4/26 Winona CS; early north 4/29 Aitkin WN, 5/3 Pennington SKS, 5/4 St. Louis AE; late south 5/18 Anoka JH, Ramsey KB, Rice TB and Washington DN, 5/24 Hennepin AB, SC.

Bay-breasted Warbler
Early south 5/9 Mower JM, 5/11 Winona CS; early north 5/14 Aitkin CB and Kanabec CM, 5/16 Becker BBe; late south 5/23 Goodhue KB, 5/25 Hennepin SC; late north 5/27 St. Louis WM, 5/29 Beltrami DJ, Carlton PS and Clay CF.

Blackpoll Warbler
Early south 5/7 Brown JW, Hennepin TT and Rice TB, 5/8 Murray ND; early north 5/7 CAss AB, Douglas SW, Grant SDM and Kanabec CM; late south 5/30 Anoka KB, 5/31 McLeod RJ; late north 5/28 Cass MN and Polk AB, 5/29 Carlton PS and Clay CF.

Cerulean Warbler
Early south 5/8 Ramsey TT, 5/9 Rice TB, 5/11Winona CS; two north reports 5/24–31 Becker BBe, 5/29 Otter Tail SDM.

Black-and-white Warbler
Early south 4/28 Olmsted CK, 4/29 Lac Qui Parle TT, 4/30 Meeker SC; early north 5/4 Kanabec CM, 5/6 Clay CF, 5/7 Carlton LW and Cass AB; late south 5/31 Washington DS.

American Redstart
Early south 5/4 Winona CS, 5/6 Cottonwood ED, 5/7 Hennepin SC, TT; early north 5/11 Clay SLM, 5/13 Aitkin WN, Kanabec CM and Marshall SKS, 5/15 St. Louis AE.

Prothonotary Warbler
Early south 5/2 Hennepin KB, 5/10 Rice JL, 5/13 Mower RRK and Winona DB, RJ, CS.

Worm-eating Warbler
Two reports: 5/10 Theodore Wirth Park, Hennepin Co. SMc *et al.*, 5/15 Wood Lake Nature Center, Hennepin Co. CMo.

Ovenbird
Early south 5/1 Hennepin OJ, 5/4 Anoka KB and Mower RRK, 5/6 Dakota TT, Nicollet DN and Sibley BL; early north 5/7 Beltrami DJ, Clay CF and Grant SDM, 5/10 Aitkin CB, Carlton LW and Kanabec CM.

Northern Waterthrush
Early south 4/30 Brown JS and Rice TB, 5/1 Anoka KB and Hennepin SC; early north 5/7 Grant SDM, 5/9 Kanabec CM, 5/11 Cook KMH and Mahnomen MCBS; late south 5/29 Hennepin TT and Scott JBe.

Louisiana Waterthrush
Early south **4/13** Winona CS, 4/29 Houston DN, 5/17 Olmsted CK, JW.

Kentucky Warbler
All reports: 5/26 Ramsey KB, 5/29 Nicollet (returned for fourth consecutive year to Seven Mile Creek County Park) MF, DN.

Connecticut Warbler
Early south 5/13 Carver MB, WM, 5/16 Blue Earth MF, Hennepin DW and Ramsey CF; early north 5/16 Aitkin CB, 5/20 St. Louis mob; late south 5/24 Anoka KB, 5/29 Hennepin TT.

Mourning Warbler
Early south 5/11 Rice JL, 5/12 Cottonwood ED, 5/13 Anoka KB; early north 5/19 Carlton LW, 5/20 St. Louis PS, TW; late south 5/29 Nicollet MF, PJ, DN, 5/31 Hennepin TT.

Common Yellowthroat
Early south 5/7 Brown JW, 5/8 Pipestone ND; early north 5/7 Douglas SW, 5/13 Becker BBe, 5/14 Aitkin CB.

Hooded Warbler
All reports 5/10 Scott SK (three territories at Murphy-Hanrahan Park Reserve, BF), 5/14 Mower JM, 5/25 Hennepin SC.

Wilson's Warbler
Early south 5/6 Goodhue RB, 5/7 Rice TB; early north 5/12 Polk MCBS, 5/16 Kanabec CM; late south 5/28 Hennepin SC, 5/30 Anoka KB; late north 5/29 Clay CF, St. Louis SS.

Canada Warbler
Early south 5/11 Hennepin DB, 5/13 Murray ND and Washington TEB; early north 5/13 St. Louis AE, 5/14 Douglas SW, 5/16 Aitkin CB; late south 5/29 Hennepin SC, 5/30 Brown JS, 5/31 Mower RRK.

Yellow-breasted Chat
One report 5/28–29 Moulton Township, Murray Co. ND.

Tanagers to Snow Bunting

Summer Tanager
One report 5/10–11 Rice GGC, FKS (***The Loon*** 67:176).

Scarlet Tanager
Early south 5/8 Ramsey TT, 5/9 Mower JM; early north 5/15 Becker BBe, 5/16 Aitkin CB.

WESTERN TANAGER
An invasion in May, with 19 reports of 20 individuals in 14 counties, between 5/4 and 5/24 (***The Loon*** 67:180). Only seven of these records have been documented by written details or photos: Blue Earth MF, Faribault WF, Crow Wing (Crosby) RJ, Mille Lacs RG, RJ, Olmstead RG, RJ, JSt, Todd JSK, and Wright RJ, KM. Unsubstantiated reports were from Anoka, Crow Wing (Cross Lake), Goodhue, Hennepin, Nobles, Ramsey, Roseau and St. Louis counties.

Northern Cardinal
Reported from 23 south and nine north counties.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Early south 5/2 Hennepin SK, 5/3 Anoka KB; early north 5/6 Douglas SW, 5/7 Clay CF, Grant SDM and Kanabec CM.

BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK
One report 5/17 Moorhead, Clay Co. SM, GN *et al.* (***The Loon*** 67:182).

Blue Grosbeak
All reports: 5/22 Nobles, Pipestone and Rock ND.

Indigo Bunting
Early south 5/9 Washington TEB and Winona CS, 5/10 Mower RRK; early north 5/12 Becker BK and Pennington SKS.

PAINTED BUNTING
Fifth state record 5/24 Blaine, Anoka Co. BME (no documentation).

Dickcissel
Early south **4/28** Lac Qui Parle RH, 5/11 Rice OR, 5/29 Washington DS. Only report north 5/24 Clay MN.

Rufous-sided Towhee
Early south 4/15 Big Stone DO, Brown JS and Lac Qui Parle RJ; early north 5/7 Otter Tail SDM and St. Louis TW, 5/10 Todd JSK.

American Tree Sparrow
Late south 5/4 Hennepin SC, 5/13 Rice (12) JL, **5/16** Wabasha CK; late north 5/1 Cook KMH, 5/6 Douglas SW, 5/13 Becker BBe.

Chipping Sparrow
Early south 3/22 Olmsted AMP, 3/29 Lac Qui Parle FE; early north 4/17 Becker BBe, 4/20 Kanabec CM.

Clay-colored Sparrow
Early south 4/28 Lyon RJ and Olmsted CK, 4/29 Lac Qui Parle DBS and Murray ND; early north **4/26** Aitkin WN, 5/2 Kanabec CM and Otter Tail SDM.

Field Sparrow
Early south 4/8 Houston FL, JST, 4/14 Washington TEB; early north 4/17 Douglas SW, 4/22 Clay RO, 4/24 Polk MCBS.

Vesper Sparrow
Early south 3/26 Cottonwood County ED,

4/6 Rice TB; early north 4/15 Douglas SW, 4/20 Becker BBe, 4/22 Clay RO and Wilkin KB, CF.

Lark Sparrow
Early south reports 4/30 Pipestone AB, 5/5 Nicollet KE, 5/6 Dakota County TT; early north reports 5/8 Becker BBe, 5/20 **Cook** OSL and **St. Louis** DBe, 5/22 **Lake** KE, PS.

Sharp-tailed Sparrow
Early north **5/16** (ties earliest date north) Becker BBe, 5/20 Aitkin WN, 5/24 Polk MCBS.

Fox Sparrow
Early south 3/12 Olmsted CK, 3/15 Fillmore RG, RJ; early north 3/25 Becker BK, Clay CF and Kanabec CM; late south 4/26 Cottonwood ED and Washington

Lark Sparrow, 22 May 1995, Little Marais, Lake County. Photo by Peder Svingen.

Savannah Sparrow
Early south **3/21** (ties earliest date on record) Cottonwood ED, 4/6 Rice TB and Rock RJ; early north 4/17 Wilkin SDM, 4/22 Aitkin WN, Clay RO and Kanabec CM.

Grasshopper Sparrow
Early south 4/29 Lac Qui Parle RH, 5/6 Dakota TT, 5/11 Rice TB; early north 5/28–29 **St. Louis** mob.

LeConte's Sparrow
Early south 4/28 Lac Qui Parle RH, 5/1 Hennepin SC, 5/5 Rice TB; early north 5/14 Clay RO, 5/17 Aitkin WN, 5/19 St. Louis WM.

WL; late north 4/24 Koochiching SLM, 4/29 Clay CF, RO.

Song Sparrow
Early north **3/19** Douglas SW and Otter Tail SDM, **3/22** Kanabec CM.

Lincoln's Sparrow
Early south 4/10 Lincoln HK, 4/28 Lac Qui Parle RH; early north 5/2 Otter Tail SDM, 5/7 Kanabec CM; late south 5/29 Hennepin PJ and Nicollet MF.

Swamp Sparrow
Early south **3/12** (ties the earliest date on record) Hennepin KB, **3/14** Winona CS,

3/16 Washington TEB; early north 4/17 Clay RO, 4/22 Aitkin PJ, 4/28 Kanabec County CM.

White-throated Sparrow
Early south 3/1 Hennepin (overwintered) SC, 3/2 Houston (overwintered) EMF, 3/18 Olmstead CK; early north **3/10** Aitkin WN, 4/16 St. Louis ME; late south 5/29 Hennepin DW.

White-crowned Sparrow
Early south 4/17 Washington DS, 4/23 Winona AM; early north 4/20 Becker BBe, 5/8 Aitkin CB; late south 5/20 Jackson AB, 5/21 Cottonwood ED; late north 5/24 Cook KMH, 5/25 Koochiching GM.

Harris' Sparrow
Early south 4/9 Cottonwood ED, 4/28 Pipestone JP, 4/29 Murray ND; early north 4/26 Aitkin WN, 5/3 St. Louis NJ, 5/7 Grant SDM; late south 5/21 Hennepin JBe, 5/24 Lac Qui Parle FE, **5/28** Pipestone JP; late north 5/23 Becker BK and Koochiching GM.

Dark-eyed Junco
Late south 5/12 Washington County TEB, DN, 5/16 Cottonwood ED, 5/24 Hennepin SC.

Lapland Longspur
Late south 4/1 Jackson RJ, 4/15 Dakota (75) TT, 4/30 Lincoln AB; late north 5/20 St. Louis SS, TW, 5/22 Lake (3) KE, PS.

Chestnut-collared Longspur
Early north 4/22 Clay SKS.

Snow Bunting
Late south 3/25 McLeod RJ, 5/11 Kandiyohi RF/JC, **5/14** Dakota *fide* AH; late north 3/10 Beltrami DJ, 3/26 Carlton AB, 3/29 Cook OSL.

Blackbirds

Bobolink
Early south 5/3 Cottonwood ED, 5/4 Rice TB, 5/6 Dakota TT, Nicollet JW and Sibley County BL; early north **4/22** (second earliest date north) Clay CN, RO, 5/7 Douglas SW and Pine CM.

Red-winged Blackbird
Early north 3/13 Otter Tail County SDM, 3/14 Becker BBe and Kanabec CM.

Eastern Meadowlark
Early north 3/18 Douglas KKW, 3/24 Carlton LW, 4/11 Cook OSL.

Western Meadowlark
Early north 3/15 Otter Tail SDM, 3/17 Clay CF, 3/18 Pennington SKS.

Yellow-headed Blackbird
Early south 3/29 Martin DBM, 4/1 Sibley AH, 4/6 Kandiyohi RF/JC; early north 4/22 Clay RO and Wilkin KB, CF.

Rusty Blackbird
Early south 3/12 Anoka PKL and Dakota KB; early north 3/15 Otter Tail SDM, 4/2 Red Lake SKS; late south 5/5 Winona CS, 5/7 Cottonwood ED; late north 5/10 Carlton LW, 5/15 St. Louis NJ.

Brewer's Blackbird
Early south 3/12 Scott AB, 3/18 Houston PJ; early north 3/23 Pennington SKS, 4/2 Douglas SW, 4/17 Carlton LW.

Common Grackle
Early north 3/12 Mille Lacs AB, 3/14 St. Louis LW, TW.

Brown-headed Cowbird
Early south 3/12 Dakota KB and Scott AB; early north **3/31** Kanabec CM, 4/15 Douglas SW, 4/17 Clay CF.

Orchard Oriole
Early south 5/12 Hennepin PJ, 5/15 Lac Qui Parle FE, 5/20 Olmsted CK, JST, JW; early north **5/7** Otter Tail SDM, 5/16 Becker BBe, 5/20 Grant SDM. Three additional reports north and east of the usual range: 5/27 Roseau PS, 5/28 **St. Louis** TEB and **Lake** mob.

Northern Oriole
Early south 5/3 Anoka County KB, and 5/

5 Winona County CS; early north 5/8 Otter Tail SDM and Todd County JSK, 5/9 Becker SDM. A "Bullock's" race reported without details 5/18 from Becker County BBe.

Finches to Weaver Finches

Pine Grosbeak
Late north 4/5 Cook KMH, 4/11 Itasca BN.

Purple Finch
Late south 5/10 Anoka CF, 5/12 Wright RJ, 5/13 Goodhue DZ.

House Finch
Reported from 29 counties south and 17 north counties, including nest building in Tofte, Cook Co. (RJ) and the first breeding record for Ely, St. Louis Co. (SS).

Red Crossbill
Only report on 3/4 from St. Louis County *fide* AH.

White-winged Crossbill
All reports: 3/4 Koochiching County KB, TT and St. Louis *fide* AH, 3/8 St. Louis KB, 3/18 Anoka JH, 5/20 St. Louis (2) PB.

Common Redpoll
Only report south 4/4 Washington DS; late north 3/10 St. Louis KB, 3/11 Cook KMH, 3/12 Itasca DS.

Pine Siskin
Reported from ten south and 22 north counties.

American Goldfinch
Reported from 30 south and 24 north counties.

Evening Grosbeak
Reported from 15 north counties.

House Sparrow
Reported from 24 south and 15 north counties.

Observers

RA	Ruth Andberg
KB	Karl Bardon
JBa	Jim Barge
SB	Sue Barton
TEB	Tom & Elizabeth Bell
BBe	Betsy Beneke
DBe	David Benson
JBl	Jo Blanich
TBo	Tom Boevers
BBo	Brad Bolduan
AB	Al Bolduc
DBo	Don Bolduc
ABo	Ann Bollinger
TBr	Terry Brashear
RB	Richard Brasket
DBr	Diane Brudelie
PBu	Paul Budde
CB	Cindy Butler
MB	Mike Butterfield
SC	Steve Carlson
GGC	George & Gloria Cloutier
JDa	Jeff Dains
JD	Jeff Dankert
SD	Steve Deger
ND	Nelvina DeKam
ED	Ed Duerksen
KE	Kim Eckert
FE	Fred Eckhardt
DE	Dudley Edmondson
BKE	Bill & Margret Ekstrom
VE	V. John Ella
ME	Molly Evans
AE	Audrey Evers
BF	Bruce A. Fall
WF	Wayne Fedor
LF	Lawrence W. Filter
HJF	Herbert & Jeanette Fisher
TF	Troy Flicek
EMF	Eugene & Marilynn Ford
CF	Cole Foster
RF/JC	Randy Frederickson & Jean Chapin
MF	Merrill J. Frydendall
JF	J. S. Futcher
EG	Esther Gesick
RG	Ray Glassel
MH	Mike Hendrickson
AH	Anthony Hertzel
KMH	Ken & Molly Hoffman
RH	Robert E. Holtz
JH	James L. Howitz
BH	Bill Huser
NJ	Nancy Jackson
RJ	Robert B. Janssen
PJ	Paul Jantscher
DJe	Douglas Jenness
ALJ	Andrea & Lowell Johnson
DJ	Douglas P. Johnson
FN	Fran Johnson
OJ	Oscar L. Johnson
BK	Byron Kinkade
RRK	Ron & Rose Kneeskern
JSK	John & Susan Kroll
CK	Chuck Krulas
SK	Scott Krych
HK	Henry C. Kyllingstad
PKL	Pat & Ken LaFond
DL	Don Larson
JLe	John Leinen
Fl	Fred Lesher
BL	Bill Litkey
JL	John Little
WL	William H. Longley
JLu	Joe Luca

OSL	Orvis & Sandy Lunke
WM	William Marengo
GM	Grace Marquardt
KM	Kurt Marple
DBM	Dennis & Barbara Martin
SLM	Suzanne & Lyle Mathews
SMc	Stuart Mckernan
SM	Spencer Meeks
CM	Craig Menze
TM	Ted Mershon
AM	A. Steven Midthune
SDM	Steve & Diane Millard
MCBS	Minnesota Biological Survey
CMo	Chris Moe
DM	Darrel Mohn
JM	John Morrison
SM/CE	Steve Mortenson & Carol Estes
DN	Dave Neitzel
BN	Bill Nelson
WN	Warren Nelson
GN	Gary Nielsen
CN	Connie Norheim
RO	Robert O'Connor
DO	Dan Orr
JP	Johanna Pals
AP	Allen Peterson
MDP	Meyers & Daphne Peterson
AMP	Anne Marie Plunkett
JPo	Jim Pomplun
MP	Milt Powell
KR	Kim Risen
OR	Orwin A. Rustad
SS	Steven Schon
CS	Carol Schumacher
DBS	Drew & Becky Smith
TS/JB	Thom Soule & Janet Boe
DS	Dave Sovereign
JSp	Jack Sprenger
WMS	Wally & Mary Steinhoff
JSt	Jeff Stephenson
SKS	Shelley & Keith Steva
FKS	Forest & Kirsten Strnad
PS	Peder Svingen
HT	Howard Towle
TT	Tom Tustison
SW	Stuart Wagenius
JW	Jesse Wallace
DW	Don Wanschura
LW	Larry Weber
SW	Steve Weston
KKW	Kristine & Kyle Wicklund
TW	Terry Wiens
SW/MS	Steve Wilson & Mary Shedd
DZ	Dave Zumeta
mob	many observers

BIRDING BY HINDSIGHT

A Second Look at First State Records (Part One)

Kim R. Eckert

Or would it more instructive to take a first look at second state records? No, come to think of it, now that we're stuck in the middle of winter without a whole lot of birds around to look at, we could use something more interesting to look forward to, something to daydream about. Assuming that spring eventually gets here, what better fantasy to have now than finding Minnesota's next first state record when migrants start stirring in a couple months?

Trying to predict what species might be the next additions to the Minnesota list is mostly a matter of looking over the lists of neighboring states and provinces to see what birds they have recorded which are missing from our list. For ex-

ample, it should have been no surprise when the first records of Curlew Sandpiper, White Ibis and Glaucous-winged Gull turned up during the past couple years since all three had already been found more than once near Minnesota. On the other hand, the Crested Caracara and Calliope Hummingbird in 1994 were quite unexpected since neither species had ever been recorded near here.

But another consideration to take into account when making these first-state-record predictions would be the difficulty involved in identifying these species. In other words, it is safe to say that some birds have already shown up here, and have actually been seen by someone, but they remain unrecorded in Minnesota because their identifying field marks are hard to determine. It probably didn't take long for the observers involved to figure out the identity of that Curlew Sandpiper (which was in alternate — i.e., breeding — plumage), Crested Caracara and White Ibis. But, on the other hand, if that Curlew Sandpiper had been in basic (i.e., winter) or juvenile plumage, it may well have been overlooked and would still be missing from Minnesota's list. If it hadn't been for the specimen along with a series of photographs, the Calliope Hummingbird never would have been identified with any certainty. And without careful study by a number of observers and some identifiable photographs, last fall's Glaucous-winged Gull would not have been accepted on the state list.

So, which species are the best candidates for being future additions to the Minnesota list? Of course, any selection would be subjective and would vary from writer to writer, but most of the species are included below because they have already occurred in at least two or more states or provinces adjacent to Minnesota (i.e., Ontario, Manitoba, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Wisconsin and Michigan), so there is some precedence for their tendency to wander in this direction. Some of these selections are long overdue in Minnesota, others will seem more surprising and less likely, but that discussion is a subject for another article. For the purposes of this article (it's supposed to be about identification, remember?), I would then divide them into two groups. Those in this first half are 22 species with relatively straightforward identifications; that is, they are adequately covered in the field guides, especially in *National Geographic's Field Guide to the Birds of North America*. This is not to say these are all easy identifications, however. Many will not be noticed and identified unless the observer is first aware of their field marks and potential for occurring in Minnesota, most have other species similar to them in appearance, and of course all of them would need to be carefully documented, hopefully with identifiable photographs. At least five of these species (Wood Stork, Smew, White-tailed Kite, Heerman's Gull and Black Skimmer) have already been reported in Minnesota, but they have not been accepted on the state list.

Northern Gannet
Brown Pelican
Roseate Spoonbill
Wood Stork
Smew
White-tailed Kite
Spotted Redshank
Wandering Tattler
Heerman's Gull
White-winged Tern
Sooty Tern
Black Skimmer
Thick-billed Murre
Black Guillemot
Inca Dove
White-throated Swift
Gray Kingbird
Cave Swallow
Pinyon Jay
Phainopepla
Virginia's Warbler

The second group of potential first state records includes 22 species (or species groups) that pose potential identification problems, some so difficult that it will take a banded bird or a specimen to

gain acceptance on the Minnesota list. Because of this, most of these birds would tend to be more difficult to detect if they ever did show up — indeed, it seems likely that some of these have already occurred in Minnesota but were simply overlooked, unable to be identified. Also, unlike the species in the first group, several of the birds below have never actually been recorded in adjacent states/provinces, but it is reasonable to speculate they may have already occurred undetected.

Because of space considerations, only the first 11 of these 22 are discussed below; the others will be covered in a second installment of this article in a future issue. Some brief comments on the identification of these species is given below, and in some cases the reader is referred to other sources for more information: articles in *American Birds* (published by National Audubon Society) and *Birding* (journal of the American Birding Association), and the books *A Field Guide to Advanced Birding* by Kaufman, Waterfowl: *An Identification Guide to the Ducks, Geese and Swans of the World* by Madge and Burn, *Shorebirds: An Identification Guide to the Waders of the World* by Hayman, Marchant and Prater, and *Gulls: A Guide to Identification* by Grant.

Arctic Loon. No, this species has not been recorded anywhere near Minnesota, but the Pacific Loon is now practically regular here in fall. The problem is that the two, which were formerly considered the same species, are so much alike that who's to say some of our "Pacific" Loons weren't actually Arctics? While it's hard enough for many birders to just separate Pacific Loon in juvenile or basic plumage from Common Loon, if you actually find one, take a second look to see if it might possibly be an Arctic and start taking notes and photographs.

Compared to Pacific Loon, an Arctic in juvenile/basic plumage might appear larger overall with a larger bill; its hindneck might not appear quite as pale, contrasting less with the crown and back; and it will lack a complete "chinstrap" and "ventstrap" (i.e., a dark line across the under tail coverts, visible only when the loon is preening or flying). However, if you're looking at a possible Arctic Loon, it is unlikely a Pacific will also be there for direct comparison. Also, some juvenile Pacifics also lack a chinstrap, and both Pacifics and Arctics may have only an incomplete or pale ventstrap (which is hard enough to see in the first place).

A better Arctic Loon field mark, which also works on birds in alternate plumage, is the greater amount of white visible along the water line on the sides of a swimming loon, with this white area widening and more extensive on the flanks. Be aware, however, that it is entirely normal for a Pacific Loon (or a Common, for that matter) to also show white along the water line, especially when preening, but it is less extensive and it does not widen on the flanks.

If an Arctic Loon ever made it to Minnesota, it would not likely be in alternate plumage, but a few Pacifics here have been in this plumage. Accordingly, just as head color alone is not reliable in separating male scaup, it is important to note that throat color is not diagnostic on alternate Pacifics and Arctics. More than once in Churchill, Manitoba, I have seen Pacific Loons with green, not purple, throat iridescence.

Since there is no precedence for an Arctic Loon appearing in this part of North America, it would probably take some good photographs or a specimen to include this species on the state list. It is also recommended that birders refer to three articles in *Birding* (20:12–28, 21:154–158 and 22:70–73) for more information.

Anhinga. There are documented records of this species near Minnesota, and its identification would seem to be straightforward enough, so this is a strong candidate for addition to the state list. Indeed, some would claim they have already seen this species in Minnesota since there have been four documented,

but unacceptable, sight records — three of these were initially accepted on the state list but later reconsidered. The problem is that even experienced birders are unaware that cormorants often soar at unexpectedly high altitudes, sometimes in a "kettle" in the manner of soaring raptors. And when a cormorant does this, its neck may appear perfectly straight, its wings held flat and stiff as it circles, and its tail can look longer and even be fanned out somewhat in order to catch the thermals. In other words, if you've never seen a soaring cormorant high overhead, it would be easy to mistake one for an Anhinga.

Tufted Duck. Here we have another species that has not only been seen before in this region but also has been reported once in Minnesota (***The Loon*** 48:78). In this case, since the bird was an adult male, the identification was not a problem, but it was considered an unacceptable record because of the possibility of it being an escape. However, identifying this species remains a problem if it is a female or immature without a conspicuous crest or tuft, and great care and extensive documentation would be necessary to separate it from a scaup or Ring-necked Duck. Space considerations preclude any useful identification analysis here; therefore, be sure to consult the waterfowl guide by Madge and Burn for more information.

Black Vulture. Like the Anhinga, while there have been unacceptable Black Vulture records in Minnesota, the species has been recorded a few times not far from our borders, and it seems only a matter of time before we have an acceptable record. Also, Black Vulture identification is normally not much of a challenge, and, like the Anhinga, it could almost have been listed above in the first group of species. But one problem is that some observers are still fooled by vultures with black heads, even though the field guides clearly show that immature Turkey Vultures also have black heads.

However, these same field guides, Geographic included, do not adequately deal with two other field marks. One is that the Turkey Vulture has white feather shafts on the outer primaries, and the upper surface of these outer primaries is paler than the other flight feathers. These two features in combination could easily suggest the Black Vulture's pattern of whitish outer primaries; note, however, that this patch is much whiter on the Black Vulture and is also present on, and limited to, the under surface of the outer primaries.

The other problem is it has long and inexplicably been stated that Turkey Vultures glide with wings held in a dihedral while the Blacks glide with flat wings. In reality, Black Vultures typically hold their wings in a dihedral as well; therefore, when you actually do see and document Minnesota's first Black Vulture, don't let its dihedral make you or anyone else doubt the record. By the way, there is a difference in the way the two vultures flap, not glide: Turkey Vultures have slow and labored wing beats, unlike the Black Vulture's much more rapid wingbeats.

Pacific Golden-Plover. The status of this species is similar to the Arctic Loon's, which is discussed above: it was formerly conspecific with the species it is most similar to (American Golden-Plover), so it is only in recent years that birders would be looking for it, and, while there are no records anywhere near Minnesota, its identification difficulties would make it easy to overlook. One difference is, unlike the loon, relatively little has been written about Pacific Golden-Plover identification. If one did wander this way, it would likely be a juvenile in fall, which should appear brighter and buffier overall than an American Golden-Plover, especially on the breast and supercilium. Also, in any plumage, Pacifics at rest are said to have a shorter primary extension, with only 1–3 primary tips visible beyond the tertials (Americans should show 4–5 primary tips). A possible difference on flying birds would be the feet projecting

beyond the tail on a Pacific, something not visible on an American Golden-Plover.

As with the Arctic Loon, it would probably take some good photographs to accept such an unprecedented species on the Minnesota list. For more information on Pacific Golden-Plover identification, be sure to consult the Shorebirds guide by Hayman, Marchant and Prater; there are also some helpful photos and captions in *Birding* 25:322–329, and there is an article in the journal *Birding World* (4:195–204) which I have not yet seen.

Mountain Plover. Normally the identification of this species is not thought of as much of a problem. However, there have been two sight records of Mountain Plover which were initially considered acceptable (***The Loon*** 46:115 and 58:154–158), and later removed from the state list (***The Loon*** 60:146–148). What even seasoned shorebird watchers are unaware of is that both Black-bellied Plovers and American Golden-Plovers can appear during spring or summer in worn basic plumage, which means their back and wings appear relatively "smooth" overall, lacking the more familiar patterned appearance of white-edged feathers on the upperparts. As a result, a bird in such plumage, especially the golden-plover, strongly resembles the Mountain Plover in overall appearance.

Rufous-necked/Little/Temminck's/ Long-toed Stints. Many Minnesota observers are already having enough trouble with the identification of peeps especially the enigmatic Western Sandpiper, so what chance do we have in trying to detect the presence of one of these Eurasian stints? None of these has been successfully documented in or near Minnesota, but any of them could conceivably occur here and easily be overlooked. Certainly their identification is beyond the scope of this article, and clear photographs would certainly be necessary before any of these stints could be admitted to the state list. But birders interested in this challenge should not only consult the Shorebirds guide, but they should also be sure to study the outstanding article on peeps and stints in *American Birds* (38:853–876; it was also reprinted three years later — 41:212–236).

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. This is considered to be one of the most overdue species yet to appear on the Minnesota list, and its absence from our list is probably due to its resemblance to the widespread Pectoral Sandpiper. The most likely time for a Sharp-tailed to appear here would be in September or October, and it would probably be in juvenile plumage. Compared to a Pectoral, look especially for a "smoother", buffier and less streaked breast which lacks the Pectoral's sharply defined cut-off from the white belly; a wider and whiter supercilium, especially behind the eye; a more conspicuous white eye ring; and a more uniformly dark bill (Pectoral's bill bi-colored, paler on the basal half).

An adult Sharp-tailed in alternate or basic plumage would be most unlikely in Minnesota, but one in fall molting from alternate into basic plumage might be a possibility here. Since such an identification would be tricky, it would be best to consult Kaufman's *Advanced Birding* guide, the article in *American Birds* on Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (41:1356–1358), and, of course, the Shorebirds guide.

Rock Sandpiper. There are four documented Purple Sandpiper records in Minnesota, right? Well, probably, but how do we know that some of them weren't actually Rock Sandpipers? We really don't since no one seems to know how to separate these two as out-of-range vagrants, and it's only an assumption that all "Purple" Sandpipers seen in the Great Lakes region have actually been Purples. The Shorebirds guide mentions a few subtle differences between the two, but it would probably take a specimen before a Rock Sandpiper record could be accepted here. By the way, Minnesota's first Purple Sandpiper is now a specimen (***The Loon*** 39:64); perhaps a second look at it is in

order?

Western/Slaty-backed gulls. You've found an adult "black-backed" gull with pink legs that looks as large as a Herring Gull, possibly larger. A Great Black-backed Gull, right? Probably, but not necessarily. Not when you consider the Western Gull has been recorded at least twice in the eastern U.S., and the Slaty-backed Gull is one of the most overdue additions to the Minnesota list, having been documented at least five times south or east of us. And since we're dealing with gulls here, it goes without saying that the identification of these two when out of range would require careful studies, extensive written field notes, and a photograph or two. It would also help if the gull in question were an adult; certainly there is no room here to discuss the identification of immatures.

Come to think of it, a meaningful analysis of adults is also beyond the scope of this article. But the place to start is to study Grant's Gulls guide and two articles on Slaty-backeds: *American Birds* 40:207–216 and *Birding* 26:243–249. Then, although everything on a suspicious gull is worth studying, attention to a few features would probably be the most useful. First, though usually difficult to determine without photos, study especially the exact pattern of the outer primaries in flight, since the Great Black-backed, Western and Slaty-backed all differ from each other in the number and placement of white markings visible in the spread outer primaries. And be sure to note that the subterminal row of white spots, said to be diagnostic of the adult Slaty-backed, may be variable in extent on that species, and other species of gulls may even show a similar pattern.

Also consider the amount of darkness on the under surface of the flight feathers (paler gray and less extensive on Slaty-backed), the mantle color (which averages blacker on Great Black-backed, but all three gulls, especially the Slaty-backed, are variable in mantle darkness), overall size and bill size (Great Black-backed largest on average, but there can be overlap), extent of head streaking in winter, and iris color (yellow on Slaty-backed, either yellow or brown on Western, normally yellow of Great Black-backed but it may appear dark).

Roseate Tern. Like some other terns, the Roseate is declining as a breeding species in many areas, but it still could occur in Minnesota since there are at least a few Great Lakes records. The identification of a flying adult would be relatively straightforward, with its narrow and sharply delineated blackish area on the upper surface of the outer three primaries, and its lack of black on the trailing edge of the underside of the primaries. When at rest, an adult Roseate's tail on average extends farther beyond the tail than on other similar terns (though overlap with Forster's is possible), and, like other adult terns, its bill color is variable — usually all dark, but also bi-colored with the basal half red in summer.

A juvenile Roseate would be more difficult to tell, of course, but note especially its white trailing edge on the primaries with no black present on either the upper or lower surface, the black legs (reddish on other similar juveniles), the barred back, the more extensive black on the head than on other juveniles, and the white upperside of the secondaries (also shown by juvenile Arctics). For more information, be sure to consult Kaufman's *Advanced Birding* guide (the tern chapter is perhaps the most useful one in the book) also see *American Birds* 41:184-187.

The second part of this discussion on the identification of potential first state records will appear in a future issue of ***The Loon***, probably in the Winter 1996–97 issue. In the meantime, let's see if any of these predictions come true or if the next first state record is something that catches us by surprise. Also, in the meantime, see if you can guess what the last 11 species or species groups will be covered in Part Two! **8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.**

Prey Items of Long-eared Owls Wintering in Minnesota

Megan Coyle[1], Mark Martell[1], and Danny Newbauer[2]

Introduction

Long-eared Owls *(Asio otus)* are migratory, with a breeding range throughout Canada and much of the United States, and a southern wintering limit that extends into Mexico (Johnsgard 1988). In Minnesota, it is considered a summer resident outside of the prairie region (Roberts 1932). Nesting records for Minnesota are apparently scarce; Janssen (1987) showed only nine counties with breeding records since 1970. This lack of breeding records may be more a function of the owl's secluded nesting habitat than any scarcity in its numbers.

Considered "rare but regular" (Janssen 1987) during the winter, most Minnesota records are of individual birds or small roosts of up to four birds (Janssen 1987). However, other reports refer to winter gatherings in communal roosting areas (Cramp 1985). Such a communal roost was found in Bloomington, Minnesota, during the winter of 1994–1995.

We report here on our analysis of pellets collected in the early spring of 1995 at this Bloomington winter roost. Pellets are the indigestible remains of an owl's prey, and are comprised of bones, teeth, hair, scales, feathers, keratin, and chitin (Marti 1976). Analysis of owl pellets can indicate the prey in an owl's diet. The purpose of our study was to determine the prey selection of the Long-eared Owls using this Minnesota winter roost.

Study Area and Methods

The roost was located in Bloomington, Minnesota, southeast of the Minnesota River and bordered by the Minnesota River Valley National Wildlife Refuge (MRVNWR), and an industrial park. The roost was a mixed coniferous stand of white pine and red pine. Adjacent to the roost was a large, old-field grassland leading to river bottom wetlands.

We collected pellets twice during the early spring of 1995, once in March and once in April, by walking through the stand of trees that the owls were roosting in, and picking up any pellets that were seen. Complete collections of all pellets were not made on either trip, so the two trips were combined into one set of data for analysis.

A sub-sample of the pellets and pellet fragments collected were air-dried and saved for analysis. The intact pellets were first measured, length and width, using a vernier calipers, then weighed to 1/100 of a gram. Each pellet and fragment was pulled apart by hand, and fur was separated from bone. Prey was identified by examining skulls, mandibles, and teeth under a dissecting microscope, and then keyed out according to the "Mammals of Minnesota" (Hazard 1982). Reference samples were checked by Dr. Elmer Birney at the James Ford Bell Museum of Natural History. We keyed individual prey items to species, except for *Peromyscus*. There are three species of *Peromyscus* found in Minnesota, but as it is nearly impossible to tell them apart using only the skeletal remains (Hazard 1982), we grouped them together as *Peromyscus* spp.

Results

We analyzed 203 intact pellets, along with numerous pellet fragments. There were 284 prey items found in the intact pellets, and 61 prey items found in the

fragments, for a total of 345 prey items analyzed. The air-dried pellets had a mean weight of 2.93g (0.982g – 7.231g), a mean length of 4.38 cm (2.42 cm – 8.50 cm), and a mean width of 2.18 cm (1.42 cm – 4.00 cm). All of the prey remains were from small rodents: 288 meadow voles, which represented 83.5% of the total; 54 white-footed mice, 15.7% of the total; and three short-tailed shrews, 0.8% of the total. There was an average of 1.4 prey items per intact pellet: seven pellets had no identifiable prey items; 116 had one; 66 had two; 13 had three; and one pellet contained four prey items.

Discussion

The result from our study, that Long-eared Owls utilize only a few species of prey, is consistent with reports from other studies. In Ann Arbor, Michigan, it was found that meadow voles constituted 75% of the prey, while white-footed mice made up nearly 11%, and short-tailed shrews 2% (Wilson 1938). In Idaho, it was reported that mammals made up 98.7% of the Long-eared Owl's diet, of which 27.7% were white-footed mice and 14.8% were meadow voles (Marks and Marti 1984). In summarizing data on Long-eared Owl diets in North America, Marti (1976) points out that meadow voles make up 40.4% of all prey chosen, and white-footed mice 17.9%. In Europe, Mikkola (1983) reported that the common vole made up 66% of the reported prey items, while other small mammals accounted for 25.8%. Birds, frogs, lizards, and fish accounted for the other prey items.

What emerges then is a picture of the Long-eared Owl as a specialized feeder, dependent upon relatively few species of small rodents. While it has been shown in previous studies that Long-eared Owls utilize other types of prey, such as shrews, rats, birds, insects, amphibians, and reptiles (Wilson 1938, Marti 1976, Marks and Marti 1984), we did not find this variety in our study. Although pellet analysis will often underestimate or totally miss the presence of some prey types, we believe our sample to be a fairly complete picture of the prey these owls were utilizing. It is unlikely that insects or amphibians would be available to the owls during the winter in Minnesota. Birds or other mammals which might have been eaten would most likely show up in the pellets we sampled.

The domination of the meadow vole as a prey item in this study is not surprising and may be due to the fact that it is Minnesota's most prolific rodent. There can be up to 11 in a litter, while five or six is most common. It is capable of rapid population growth in favorable conditions (Hazard 1982).

The location of the roost is probably related to the owl's need for cover and hunting area. The conifers in the roost itself provide cover from weather and predation. As nocturnal hunters, owls utilize open, grassy habitats, rather than the timbered areas which might be closer to their roosts (Johnsgard 1988). It has been reported that these roosts may be re-used in subsequent years (Smith 1981). We plan to continue monitoring this roost and recording the numbers of birds using it, along with their prey selection.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank Elmer Birney, Robert Zink, Bud Tordoff, and Bill Lane for their assistance.

Literature Cited

Cramp, S., ed. 1985. Handbook of the Birds of Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa, Vol. 4, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Hazard, Evan B. 1982. The Mammals of Minnesota. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.

Janssen, Robert. 1987. Birds in Minnesota. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.

Johnsgard, Paul A. 1988. North American Owls. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington and London.

Marks, J.S. and Marti, C.D. 1984. Feeding ecology of Sympatric Barn Owls and Long-eared Owls in Idaho. Ornis.

Scand. 15:135–143.
Marti, C.D. 1976. A Review of Prey Selection by the Long-eared Owl. The Condor 78:331–336.
Mikkola, H. 1983. The Owls of Europe. Buteo Books, Vermillion, South Dakota.
Roberts, Thomas S. 1932. The Birds of Minnesota. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.
Smith, D.G. 1981. Winter Roost Site Fidelity by Long-eared Owls in Central Pennsylvania. American Birds 35:339.
Wilson, K.A. 1938. Owl Studies at Ann Arbor, Michigan. Auk 55:187–197.

[1] The Raptor Center at the University of Minnesota, 1920 Fitch Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108. [2] Hennepin Parks, Richardson Nature Center, 8737 East Bush Lake Road, Bloomington, MN 55438.

BOOK REVIEWS

AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES NATIVE TO MINNESOTA. Barney Oldfield and John Moriarty, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 237 pp., $25.95.

A book such as this one, which is intended "for the amateur herpetologist, specialist, and curious observer," needs to walk the fine line between being interesting and general enough for the curious observer, while providing solid scientific information for the specialist. Barney Oldfield and John Moriarty have done an excellent job of achieving this goal, by combining chapters on general topics of interest about Minnesota herpetology with chapters that provide a detailed species by species account.

The book begins with an introduction by Dr. Walter Breckenridge. Most readers of ***The Loon*** recognize Dr. Breckenridge as a long-standing authority on Minnesota birds. What is probably less well known is that his Ph.D. thesis topic was the reptiles and amphibians of Minnesota, which served as the basis for a book on that subject published in 1944. The introduction sets the tone for a commendable effort to note the contributions of many other researchers and naturalists through credits and citations. This is reflected by the first chapter, "History of Herpetology in Minnesota," which traces the contributions of naturalists and authors from the late 1800s to the present day.

Subsequent chapters include "Habitats," which gives a generalized overview of the habitat preferences of Minnesota's reptiles and amphibians and lists which species can be found in various aquatic and terrestrial habitats in an easy-to-follow table format. The next three chapters deal with humans and herps, exploring the topics of observation and photography, conservation, and common problems people have with herps. All three chapters contain a wealth of information even if you have absolutely no intention

of ever turning over a log in search of a rattlesnake. Since herps, more than most wildlife, attract collectors from fanatical adults to curious kids, these sections are a valuable part of the book. It is most commendable that the authors included a section on ethical field methods, something that more books on outdoor recreation should do (yes, birders, that includes us).

Slightly more than half of the book concerns itself with lists, keys, and species accounts. I thought the circular keys were very effective and hopefully will be imitated elsewhere. The species accounts are well laid-out and informative, although it is not clear why the county records were divided into pre- and post-1960 records. This section will work very well for the amateur who is interested in learning more about a particular species seen in a backyard or during an outing.

The book is highlighted by a wealth of excellent photographs, most provided by Oldfield. Each species account makes good use of these photographs, combining them with the text to make identification of various species easier for the novice. I particularly appreciated the photos which showed the different color phases of a species, such as the picture of two adult Gray Treefrogs. Other photographs, such as the one of the hatching Spiny Softshell Turtles, are as worthwhile as quality natural history photographs as they are for species identification.

The University of Minnesota Press and the authors have produced an excellent book, which would be a valuable addition to any library, particularly for all who are interested in Minnesota's natural history. For those readers of ***The Loon*** who are primarily birders, this book will provide insights into a whole new group of animals to list, and best of all — there are only 48 of them to count. **Mark Martell, 1795 Long Lake Rd., New Brighton, MN 55112.**

STOKES FIELD GUIDE TO BIRDS, EASTERN REGION, Donald and Lillian Stokes, Little, Brown and Company, New York, NY, 472 pp., $16.95.

A new field guide to birds of eastern North America has been published. The authors are Lillian and Donald Stokes, prolific birding writers who have now joined the field-guide club with both eastern and western editions, as published by Little, Brown and Company.

There are many good things about this book, and one feature I find troublesome.

Let's be positive first.

The book is handsome and well made, 5 inches wide, 8.25 inches deep, just over .75 inch thick; it will fit in your jacket pocket. It has 472 pages, so you'll list a bit to one side when you put it in that pocket.

The book is well designed. There is a "quick alphabetical index" on both inside covers. There is a color tab index to birding groups, keyed on the first page. This does help as you try to open the book to the particular section, if not exact page, that you seek. There are range maps, conveniently located on the page with all other information about the species in question. There is a seven-page "quick guide to the most common birds," backyard and feeder birds grouped by color. This isn't a bad idea; there are many birdwatchers who will get full value from their investment in this book without ever getting past these pages.

There also are what the Stokes call "learning pages." Hawks have one, as do shorebirds, gulls, flycatchers, warblers, and sparrows. These pages offer a brief, illustrated overview of the family, seeking to make your efforts more productive when you begin working with individual identification accounts.

I did not read every word on every page; I cannot vouch for the accuracy of all information in this book. But it is my impression that the text is sound. The information given is concise and clear. Identification remarks have bold-type highlights for key information. There is brief comment on feeding, nesting, behavior, habitat, voice, and conservation status. Regarding the latter, each species comes with a cryptic notation about its current population (increasing, decreas-

ing, stable), using information from Breeding Bird Surveys and Christmas Bird Counts and other sources.

There is a glossary of birding terms clearly defined. There is an index, listing both scientific and common names for birds covered.

To this point we have a fine guide book, well organized throughout with some helpful new features. Each page offers a surprising amount of information in an easily accessible fashion, with all information on that one page, a definite plus.

However: The book is illustrated with photographs.

Perhaps this is a personal prejudice. You might love photos. I find them always second-best to a skillfully done painting. The reason is that photographers are at the mercy of their subjects and the conditions that exist at the moment of truth. Birds don't always pose to show the most salient points of identification. Lighting can be poor, contrast bad, focus slightly off. I like the control that artists bring to the task.

However: The Stokes have many good photos. Bird after bird is illustrated with more than one photo, sometimes as many as four. They make a real effort to show you the bird well. If you scan the photo credits you will find the names of some of this country's finest and best-known nature and bird photographers. There *are* many good photos here. (The cover photo of Great Blue Herons, by the way, is a work of art.)

And it has to be said that the photographs in this book are several times better than the photos in *The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds*, which has, at least in my 1990 edition, absolutely abominable illustrations.

So, with that one complaint, I find this a book I could add to my library with pleasure. No single field guide has ever told me all I want or need to know; another reference is usually helpful. And, the Stokes' book certainly could be given as a gift to an aspiring birder without hesitation. **Jim Williams, 3326 Martha Lane, Minnetonka, MN 55345.**

The 1995 M.O.U. 300 Club and 1995 M.O.U. 200 County Club

Compiled by Anthony and Ann Hertzel

Seventy-nine people responded to a request for their Minnesota State Life List totals. This is the eight more than the number reporting last year. Some are new members, while others are longtime members who have not recently reported.

Perennial leader Ray Glassel added three birds — Glaucous-winged Gull, Northern Wheatear, and 1994's Calliope Hummingbird, (which he didn't include on his list last year) — to his 1994 total of 388. His 391 count is 93.5% of the official Minnesota state list. A state total of exactly 300 would be just under 72%. At this rate, Ray will be the only member of Minnesota's 400 Club by 1998.

Bob Janssen has maintained his second place distance of two birds, which he has done since 1989.

Here now are the 1995 M.O.U. 300 Club, and the 1995 M.O.U. 200 County Club lists. **8461 Pleasant View Drive, Mounds View, MN 55112.**

391 Raymond Glassel
390
389 Robert B. Janssen
388
387
386
385 Kim Eckert
384
383 Dick Ruhme
382
381
380
379 Don Bolduc
378
377
376 Jo Blanich
375 Paul Egeland
– Bill Litkey
374
373
372
371
370
369
368
367 Warren Nelson
366
365 Karol Gresser
364 Liz Campbell
363 Al Bolduc
362 Anthony Hertzel
– Jon Peterson
361 Ann McKenzie
– Steve Millard
360 Bill Pieper
359 Parker Backstrom
– Jerry Gresser
– Peder Svingen
358 Oscar Johnson
357 Harding Huber
356
355
354 Mike Mulligan
– Dick Wachtler
– Gloria Wachtler
353
352
351
350 Dennis Martin
349
348 Dick Sandve
– Jim Williams
347 Bob Ekblad
– Barbara Martin
– Dave Sovereign
346 Anne Marie Plunkett
345 Elaine McKenzie
344
343
342

341
340 Jerry Bonkoski
339
338 Steve Ekblad
– Bill Stjern
337 Bruce Baer
336 Mike Hendrickson
335 William Marengo
334 Ruth Andberg
– Doug Johnson
333 Alice Hennessey
332
331
330 Phyllis Basford
– Peter Neubeck
– Don Wanschura
329 Jerry Pruett
– Tom Tustison
328 J.S. Futcher
– Jay Hamernick
– Carol Schumacher
327 Dick Rengstorf
326
325 Byron Bratlie
324 Ken LaFond
323 Bill Penning
– Helen Tucker
322
321 Henry Kyllingstad
320 Mark Stensaas
319
318
317
316 David Benson
315 William Bronn
– Joan Johnson
– Howard Towle
314 Forest Strnad
313
312 James Egge
– Nestor Hiemenz
– Jude Hughes-Williams
311
310 Gary Simonson
– David Thurston
309 Louis Claeson
– Kirk Jeffrey
– Edwin Lins
308 David Cahlander
307
306 Connie Osbeck
305
304 Burnett Hojnacki
303 Lois Claeson
302 James Eikenberry
– Mary Zablio McGrath
301 Scott Mehus
– Kenneth Oulman
300 Tom Soulen

The 1995 M.O.U. 200 County Club

Aitkin County
271 Warren Nelson
267 Jo Blanich
245 Raymond Glassel
236 Robert B. Janssen
229 Ken LaFond
213 Cindy Butler

Anoka County
288 Ken LaFond
260 Raymond Glassel
255 Lyle Bradley
249 Steve Carlson
243 Karl Bardon
241 Robert B. Janssen
235 Ruth Andberg
226 Dick Rengstorf

Becker County
244 Betsy Beneke
229 Raymond Glassel
223 Robert B. Janssen
209 Ken LaFond

Beltrami County
235 Jeffrey Palmer
229 Doug Johnson
226 Raymond Glassel
225 Ken LaFond
214 Al Bolduc
213 Robert B. Janssen

Benton County
225 Ken LaFond
220 Raymond Glassel
216 Robert B. Janssen

Big Stone County
229 Raymond Glassel
219 Robert B. Janssen
203 Ken LaFond

Blue Earth County
232 Raymond Glassel
216 Robert B. Janssen
202 Ken LaFond

Brown County
236 Raymond Glassel
221 Robert B. Janssen
201 Ken LaFond

Carlton County
233 Ken LaFond
214 Raymond Glassel
210 Robert B. Janssen

Carver County
248 Raymond Glassel
244 Dennis Martin
233 Robert B. Janssen
229 Mike Mulligan
209 William Marengo
209 Jim Williams
204 Ken LaFond
200 Al Bolduc

Cass County
220 Raymond Glassel
211 Ken LaFond
203 Robert B. Janssen

Chippewa County
222 Raymond Glassel
215 Robert B. Janssen
211 Al Bolduc
206 Ken LaFond

Chisago County
243 Raymond Glassel
228 Ken LaFond
224 Robert B. Janssen
206 Dick Rengstorf

Clay County
232 Raymond Glassel
220 Robert B. Janssen
215 Ken LaFond
203 Betsy Beneke

Clearwater County
250 Al Bolduc
223 Raymond Glassel
217 Ken LaFond
212 Robert B. Janssen

Cook County
244 Kim Eckert
230 Robert B. Janssen
229 Raymond Glassel
225 Peder Svingen
213 Helen Tucker
207 Ken LaFond
205 Jim Williams
202 Mike Hendrickson

Cottonwood County
255 Ed Duerksen
229 Raymond Glassel
221 Robert B. Janssen
214 Jerry Bonkoski
203 Ken LaFond

Crow Wing County
250 Jo Blanich
231 Warren Nelson
228 Raymond Glassel
227 Ken LaFond
223 Robert B. Janssen

Dakota County
282 Raymond Glassel
271 Tom Tustison
258 Karol Gresser
258 Robert B. Janssen
245 Al Bolduc
236 Bill Litkey
235 Bruce Baer
230 Anne Marie Plunkett
227 Dick Rengstorf
225 Ken LaFond
222 Karl Bardon
204 Elaine McKenzie

Dodge County
228 Anne Marie Plunkett
227 Raymond Glassel
212 Robert B. Janssen
210 Jerry Bonkoski
201 Bob Ekblad
200 Ken LaFond

Douglas County
226 Ken LaFond
223 Raymond Glassel
218 Robert B. Janssen

Faribault County
223 Raymond Glassel
216 Robert B. Janssen
201 Ken LaFond

Fillmore County
241 Anne Marie Plunkett
222 Raymond Glassel
208 Robert B. Janssen
205 Ken LaFond

Freeborn County
250 Scott Mehus
237 Raymond Glassel
236 Al Batt
223 Robert B. Janssen
202 Ken LaFond
202 Anne Marie Plunkett

Goodhue County
263 Bill Litkey
262 Raymond Glassel
246 Robert B. Janssen
231 Anne Marie Plunkett
219 Al Bolduc
206 Karl Bardon
204 Bill Stjern
200 Ken LaFond

Grant County
226 Raymond Glassel
220 Robert B. Janssen
219 Kim Eckert
205 Steve Millard
202 Ken LaFond

Hennepin County
311 Oscar Johnson
307 Raymond Glassel
305 Steve Carlson
305 Robert B. Janssen
289 Al Bolduc
263 Tom Tustison
259 Karol Gresser
259 David Thurston
248 Paul Egeland
248 Dick Ruhme
246 Karl Bardon
240 Dennis Martin
240 Dick Rengstorf
239 Bill Litkey
234 Warren Woessner
231 James Eikenberry
230 Ken LaFond
230 Tom Soulen
228 Parker Backstrom
227 William Marengo
227 Peder Svingen
222 Gary Simonson
218 Ruth Andberg
214 Howard Towle
213 Jim Williams
211 Don Wanschura
203 Elaine McKenzie
200 Deanne Endrizzi

Houston County
232 Raymond Glassel
224 Anne Marie Plunkett
218 Robert B. Janssen
210 Ken LaFond

Hubbard County
224 Raymond Glassel
212 Ken LaFond
210 Robert B. Janssen

Isanti County
232 Ken LaFond
227 Raymond Glassel
210 Robert B. Janssen

Itasca County
211 Ken LaFond
210 Raymond Glassel
209 Al Bolduc
204 Robert B. Janssen

Jackson County
228 Raymond Glassel
224 Robert B. Janssen
200 Ken LaFond

Kanabec County
227 Ken LaFond
226 Raymond Glassel
208 Robert B. Janssen
208 Craig Menze

Kandiyohi County
239 Randy Frederickson
233 Raymond Glassel
230 Ronald Erpelding
220 Robert B. Janssen
212 Ken LaFond
209 Henry Kyllingstad
205 Jean Frederickson

Kittson County
221 Raymond Glassel
213 Ken LaFond
211 Robert B. Janssen
210 Karl Bardon

Koochiching County
228 Ken LaFond
208 Raymond Glassel
202 Robert B. Janssen

Lac Qui Parle County
240 Robert B. Janssen
239 Raymond Glassel
238 Fred Eckhardt
233 John Schladweiler
232 Bill Litkey
229 Al Bolduc
229 Paul Egeland
212 Ken LaFond
205 Henry Kyllingstad

Lake County
235 Dan Versaw
233 Steve Wilson
222 Raymond Glassel
222 Mary Shedd
213 Ken LaFond
210 Robert B. Janssen

Lake of the Woods County
218 Raymond Glassel
217 Shelley Steva
214 Robert B. Janssen
211 Peder Svingen
205 Ken LaFond

Le Sueur County
250 Raymond Glassel
226 Robert B. Janssen
210 Peder Svingen
205 Ken LaFond
205 Wally Swanson

Lincoln County
220 Raymond Glassel
215 Robert B. Janssen
201 Ken LaFond

Lyon County
263 Henry Kyllingstad
258 Paul Egeland
230 Raymond Glassel
225 Robert B. Janssen

200 Ken LaFond

Mahnomen County
217 Raymond Glassel
217 Robert B. Janssen
203 Ken LaFond

Marshall County
242 Shelley Steva
234 Raymond Glassel
225 Robert B. Janssen
221 Karl Bardon
209 Ken LaFond

Martin County
222 Raymond Glassel
213 Robert B. Janssen
202 Ken LaFond

McLeod County
231 Raymond Glassel
216 Robert B. Janssen
203 Ken LaFond

Meeker County
226 Raymond Glassel
218 Robert B. Janssen
214 Ken LaFond

Mille Lacs County
234 Ken LaFond
229 Raymond Glassel
220 Robert B. Janssen

Morrison County
227 Raymond Glassel
226 Ken LaFond
215 Robert B. Janssen

Mower County
236 John Morrison
231 Dick Smaby
223 Raymond Glassel
219 Robert Jessen
217 Anne Marie

Plunkett
213 Robert B. Janssen
201 Ken LaFond

Murray County
229 Nelvina De Kam
221 Raymond Glassel
212 Robert B. Janssen
202 Henry Kyllingstad
202 Ken LaFond

Nicollet County
247 Raymond Glassel
235 Robert B. Janssen
206 Ken LaFond

Nobles County
219 Raymond Glassel
214 Robert B. Janssen
204 Nelvina De Kam
201 Ken LaFond

Norman County
217 Raymond Glassel
214 Robert B. Janssen
204 Ken LaFond

Olmsted County
279 Anne Marie Plunkett
274 Jerry Bonkoski
271 Bob Ekblad
260 Jerry Pruett
256 Steve Ekblad
248 Charles Krulas
239 Raymond Glassel
233 Jesse Wallace
227 Vince Herring
224 Ron Silverman
224 Helen Tucker
222 Robert B. Janssen
205 Ken LaFond

Otter Tail County
273 Steve Millard
229 Raymond Glassel
226 Ken LaFond
224 Robert B. Janssen

Pennington County
243 Shelley Steva
220 Raymond Glassel
212 Robert B. Janssen
200 Ken LaFond

Pine County
236 Ken LaFond
234 Raymond Glassel
218 Robert B. Janssen
203 Betsy Beneke

Pipestone County
218 Raymond Glassel
212 Johanna Pals
208 Robert B. Janssen
204 Nelvina De Kam
204 Ken LaFond
203 Kim Eckert

Polk County
234 Shelley Steva
233 Robert B. Janssen
233 Peder Svingen
232 Raymond Glassel
229 Al Bolduc
213 Ken LaFond

Pope County
224 Raymond Glassel
221 Robert B. Janssen
202 Ken LaFond

Ramsey County
272 Raymond Glassel
265 Bill Litkey
256 Karl Bardon
252 Robert B. Janssen
233 Dick Rengstorf
231 Ken LaFond
229 David Thurston
227 Robert Holtz
210 Al Bolduc
205 Frank Berdan

Red Lake County
214 Raymond Glassel
212 Robert B. Janssen
202 Ken LaFond

Redwood County
228 Raymond Glassel
225 Robert B. Janssen
201 Ken LaFond

Renville County
235 Raymond Glassel
223 Robert B. Janssen
215 Paul Egeland
210 Ken LaFond

Rice County
259 Orwin Rustad
257 Tom Boevers
255 Raymond Glassel
254 Forest Strnad
228 Robert B. Janssen
219 Kirk Jeffrey
212 Anne Marie Plunkett
205 Ken LaFond
204 Troy Flicek
203 Paul Egeland
201 Jon Little
200 Wally Swanson

Rock County
243 Kim Eckert
223 Raymond Glassel
214 Nelvina De Kam
210 Robert B. Janssen
202 Ken LaFond

Roseau County
260 Peder Svingen
241 Karl Bardon
231 Raymond Glassel
224 Robert B. Janssen
211 Ken LaFond
204 Shelley Steva

Saint Louis County
319 Kim Eckert
300 Mike Hendrickson
285 Paul Egeland
285 Burnett Hojnacki
281 Robert B. Janssen
280 Parker Backstrom
278 Raymond Glassel
278 Doug Johnson
276 Dave Benson
271 Bill Penning
271 Peder Svingen
263 Bill Litkey
261 Mark Stensaas
255 Ken LaFond
249 Dennis Martin
247 Dick Ruhme
247 Terry Wiens
243 Dudley Edmondson
241 Al Bolduc
236 Steven Schon
235 William Marengo
224 Dick Sandve
224 Jim Williams
223 Bob Ekblad
223 Steve Ekblad
221 Steve Wilson
218 Anne Marie Plunkett
215 Scott Mehus
212 Karl Bardon
211 Henry Kyllingstad
209 Oscar Johnson
208 Craig Menze
202 Louis Claeson
202 Dan Versaw
201 Jerry Bonkoski

Scott County
259 Raymond Glassel
234 Robert B. Janssen
209 Al Bolduc
208 Ken LaFond

Sherburne County
244 Raymond Glassel
238 Ken LaFond
235 Robert B. Janssen
228 Jay Hamernick

Sibley County
246 Raymond Glassel
231 Robert B. Janssen
200 Ken LaFond

Stearns County
274 Nestor M. Hiemenz
240 Kim Eckert
237 Raymond Glassel
228 Ken LaFond
225 Robert B. Janssen

Steele County
242 Raymond Glassel
217 Robert B. Janssen
210 Anne Marie Plunkett
200 Ken LaFond

Stevens County
223 Raymond Glassel
213 Robert B. Janssen
202 Ken LaFond

Swift County
229 Raymond Glassel
220 Robert B. Janssen
202 Ken LaFond

Todd County
240 Ken LaFond
226 Raymond Glassel
212 Robert B. Janssen

Traverse County
227 Raymond Glassel
217 Robert B. Janssen
202 Ken LaFond

Wabasha County
248 Raymond Glassel
241 Don Mahle
239 Helen Tucker
232 Robert B. Janssen
228 Anne Marie Plunkett
220 Bill Litkey
212 Ken LaFond
202 Al Bolduc

Wadena County
216 Raymond Glassel
209 Ken LaFond
207 Robert B. Janssen

Waseca County
235 Raymond Glassel
215 Robert B. Janssen
200 Ken LaFond

Washington County
278 Raymond Glassel
269 Bill Litkey
252 Dick Rengstorf
244 Robert B. Janssen
230 Ken LaFond
227 Tom Bell
209 Bill Penning

Watonwan County
224 Raymond Glassel
222 Robert B. Janssen
203 Ken LaFond

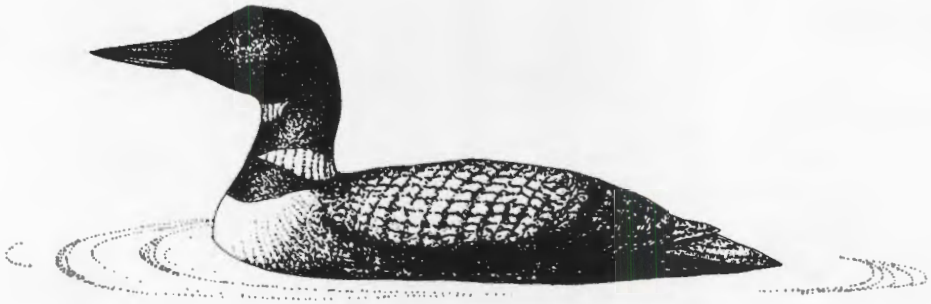
Wilkin County
226 Raymond Glassel
220 Robert B. Janssen
208 Steve Millard
203 Ken LaFond

Winona County
248 Raymond Glassel
247 Anne Marie Plunkett
231 Steven Midthune
227 Robert B. Janssen
202 Ken LaFond

Wright County
250 Raymond Glassel
232 Robert B. Janssen
226 Ken LaFond
203 Al Bolduc

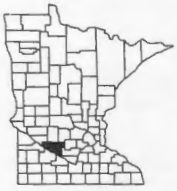
Yellow Medicine County
235 Paul Egeland
234 Raymond Glassel
221 Robert B. Janssen
203 Ken LaFond

Numbers as of 12/31/95



NOTES OF INTEREST

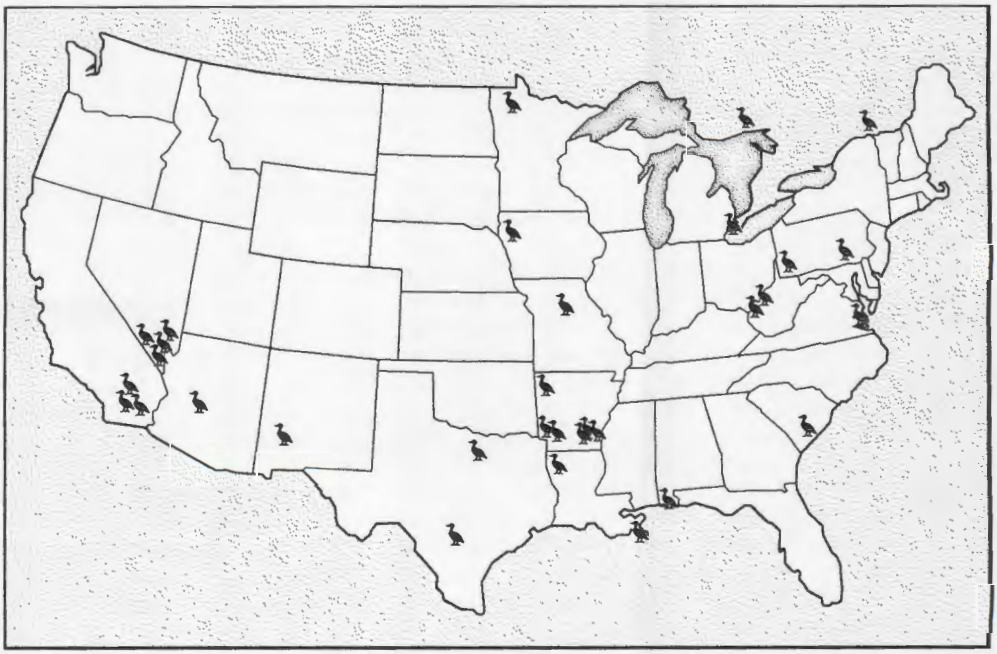
ABUNDANT CLIFF SWALLOWS — On 25 August 1995, Ray Glassel and I birded several counties in west central Minnesota, including Redwood, Chippewa, Big Stone, Lac Qui Parle, and Yellow Medicine. On our return trip to the Twin Cities, we drove Highway 212 across the corn and soybean landscape of Renville County. Upon leaving Granite Falls, I began noticing an abundance of Cliff Swallows along the road and over the fields adjacent to the highway. This abundance continued for over 65 miles and one and a half hours until we reached Glencoe in McLeod County. Cliff Swallows were in constant sight during this period, sometimes in large groups numbering 50 or more birds and sometimes in smaller groups. At no point during this distance and time do I recall not having Cliff Swallows in view. The situation was incredible. I had no way of estimating or counting numbers other than to say there were tens of thousands of birds present. At Buffalo Lake in eastern Renville County, we turned off the highway to go to the sewage ponds located approximately two miles northeast of town and found that Cliff Swallows were in large numbers here as well. **Robert B. Janssen, 10521 S. Cedar Lake Road, #212, Minnetonka, MN 55305.**



JUVENILE SABINE'S GULL AT AGASSIZ N.W.R. — On 6 September 1995 at Agassiz N.W.R., Marshall County, Sue Barton and I were scanning the Headquarters Pool when I spotted a small gull with slender, pointed wings that was flying gracefully just above the water. Its striking pattern of black primaries, dark gray to brownish-gray wedge on the inner forewing, and white on the rest of the upperwing brought instant recognition and I called out "Sabine's Gull!" We watched it repeatedly dip to the surface and it briefly sat on the water several times. After noting its forked tail with black terminal band and dusky underwing coverts that contrasted with its white flight feathers, I began writing notes as Sue continued observing plumage details and behavior. She described a brownish-gray wash on the hindcrown and nape which was most apparent while the bird was on the water. Its back also appeared brownish-gray. The rest of its plumage was white. The bird was never close enough to observe details of its bare parts. After only four minutes of observation, the bird suddenly gained altitude and departed to the south-

west. Winds were gusting from the northeast following passage of a strong cold front earlier in the week. This represents the sixteenth record of this casual species in Minnesota and the first for the northwest region. Except for two records of spring migrants, all have been found between 30 August and 17 October. **Peder Svingen, 2602 E. Fourth St., Duluth, MN 55812–1533.**

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK IN ROSEAU COUNTY — On 7 September 1995 at 12:20 P.M. while scanning through ducks in flight at Roseau River W.M.A., a striking black-and-white upperwing pattern on a large duck caught my attention. The bird was at least as large as a Northern Shoveler. I noted its bright pink–orange bill before concentrating on the wing pattern, especially trying to see the underwing. The upperwing showed cinnamon on the leading edge, black on the entire trailing edge (primaries and secondaries), and an extensive white patch along the base of the flight feathers. The rump and tail were dark. The entire underwing and belly appeared black. Its legs and feet were not noted. The bird was in view for only 20 seconds before it dropped into the marsh near the northeast corner of Pool #1. Although the possibility of escapes or releases must be considered, the early September date is consistent with other extralimital occurrences, most of which are in summer or early fall. According to the sixth edition of the *Check-list of North American birds* (A.O.U. 1983), the Black-bellied Whistling-Duck is casual in southern California, Colorado, southern New Mexico, Kansas, Iowa, Michigan, and Louisiana. A review of *American Birds/N.A.S. Field Notes* for the past five years (1990–1994) found first state or provincial records reported from Alabama, West Virginia, Missouri, and Ontario. Ontario's first record was a flock of nine birds in Blezard Valley, Sudbury County from 17 June to 7 July 1993 (this location is east of



Extralimital records of Black-bellied Whistling Duck, 1990–1994.

Sault Ste. Marie). The second provincial record was a flock of twelve in Kingsville, Essex County during late May 1994. Both were recently accepted by the Ontario Bird Records Committee (*Ontario Birds* 13:49–50). There has been consistent range expansion within Arizona, Texas, and Florida since 1990 with recent occurrences in Monona County, Iowa (24 October 1993) and several other states (see map). Kenn Kaufman recently commented on the apparent validity of these extralimital records (*N.A.S. Field Notes* 48:266). There are now four acceptable records (***The Loon*** 58:97–98 and 59:217) in Minnesota. Thanks to Anthony Hertzel for producing the accompanying map. **Peder Svingen, 2602 E. Fourth St., Duluth, MN 55812–1533.**

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE AT BLACK DOG LAKE — On 1 Dec. 1995, I discovered a Black-legged Kittiwake (basic I plumage) in a large flock of gulls roosting at Black Dog Lake, Burnsville (Dakota County). I had been viewing the gulls for about 20 minutes when I first noticed this individual, which was fluttering low over the partly open water in and among the estimated 2,000 Herring Gulls plus about 50 Ring-billed Gulls. The weather was clear, calm and mild, and even though it was 15 minutes after sunset, it was still light enough to see clearly the distinctive field marks that are diagnostic for this species. The kittiwake then settled on the water among the other gulls and I watched it for another 15 minutes as it swam among them. It roosted on the lake that evening, and several of us who arrived at Black Dog early the next morning (2 December) found it again at about the same spot as it became light enough to see (about 35 minutes before sunrise). After about 15 minutes, it flew off to the east with most of the other gulls, and despite much searching, no one rediscovered it that day until late afternoon, when it returned to the same location with other gulls, about a half hour before sunset. At this time, at least 15–20 other observers were able to see the bird. Unfortunately, it remained there only about ten minutes, then flew off to the west and apparently did not return to roost there. The next day, many people searched for it throughout the day, starting well before sunrise, but it was not relocated. The outer primaries were blackish as were the primary coverts; the black extended all the way to the wrist. The inner primaries and secondaries were paler gray. There was a blackish "carpal bar" on the inner wing (from wrist to mid body), and this plus the black outer four or so primaries formed a distinctive and conspicuous "M" across the dorsal surface of the wings. I was unable to determine the underwing pattern. The gull's head and underparts were white, except for a bold black dime-sized spot behind and somewhat below the dark eye, and a very conspicuous black dorsal half-collar on the lower hindneck, an inch or two wide and extending across the nape and down onto the sides of the neck. The tail, which was white with a broad terminal black band also an inch or so wide, was fanned most of the time in flight and appeared squared to slightly rounded. The bill was solid black, and had the characteristic shape of the genus *(Rissa)* — culmen gently decurved to the tip, lower mandible straight to somewhat decurved, the outline interrupted by only a slight gonydeal angle. The bird was somewhat smaller and daintier than nearby Ring-billed Gulls; it seemed closer to Franklin's Gull in size (although there were no individuals of that species for comparison). When the gull was swimming, the blackish carpal bar and nape collar were apparent, contrasting with the gray back, which was about the same shade as that of the Herring Gulls around it. The only previous Twin Cities kittiwake record was 3–8 December 1988, also at Black Dog Lake and the nearby Minnesota River (***The Loon*** 61:45–6). That bird was one of eight gull species seen at Black Dog on 5 December 1988, probably a record for the most species of gulls observed in a single day at one locality in Minnesota (***The Loon*** 61:3–4). The other seven species of

gull that year included Great Black-backed, Lesser Black-backed, Iceland, Thayer's, Glaucous, Ring-billed and Herring. Almost exactly seven years later, that record was duplicated. This kittiwake was one of eight gull species that I found at Black Dog in less than an hour on the afternoon of 1 December 1995. Seven of these were the same species as those in 1988. Great Black-backed Gull was not included, but replacing it was a Glaucous-winged Gull — a rediscovery of Minnesota's first state record of that species, last seen 17 days earlier and presumed gone from the area. **Bruce A. Fall, 4300 29th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55455.**

RED-EYED VIREO SONG INCORPORATES CALL OF BROAD-WINGED HAWK —

While monitoring singing birds as part of a large-scale breeding bird census I observed a Red-eyed Vireo *(Vireo olivaceus)* which appeared to have incorporated the call of a Broad-winged Hawk *(Buteo platypterus)* into its song. The vireo sang approximately six times during the five minute census. All recorded singing episodes included a single Broad-winged Hawk call inserted, without pause, between "standard" Red-eyed Vireo song fragments. Visual identification of the bird was made while it sang both the vireo and hawk phrases. The volume of the vireo's "hawk call" was less than what would be expected from a hawk at a similar distance (approximately 10 m), but was otherwise identical as heard by my unaided ear (with three years experience censusing birds in this area). This behavior was recorded on 17 June 1995 in St. Louis County, at a location 22 km northeast of the town of Cook (48 00'N, 92 30'W). The area was not revisited after this observation was made. Habitat on the site consisted of mixed upland forest dominated by quaking aspen and jack pine. **Timothy J. Fenske-Crawford, Natural Resources Research Institute and University of Minnesota, 5013 Miller Trunk Highway, Duluth, MN 55811.**

GROUP OF SIX SHARP-TAILED SPARROWS IN ANOKA COUNTY — Although the

Sharp-tailed Sparrow is a local breeder in Minnesota from Aitkin and possibly Morrison counties northwestward, they are very seldom found in migration in southern Minnesota (and probably seldom actually looked for). Because of this, I made a concerted effort to find this species in September 1995 at Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area, Anoka County, an area which in many ways looks very similar to breeding areas used in northwestern Minnesota such as Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge. On 21 September, after spending two hours pishing at points along the dike roadsides at Carlos Avery and counting a total of over 80 Swamp Sparrows, I finally discovered a Sharp-tailed Sparrow in a narrow strip of cattails at the edge of pool 4. As I studied this bird and continued pishing to keep its interest, I was surprised to eventually see at least six individuals, all within a few feet of each other. All six birds popped up onto cattail stems and sat within clear view of the road long enough to be drawn and photographed. They were very tame and easily observed. I returned an hour later with Jeff Dains, and we were able to locate five of the Sharp-tailed Sparrows in the same location. Most interestingly, we observed one bird with a small object in its bill (presumably food) hop over to another individual and feed it. Neither bird fluttered its wings or called in any way which is normally associated with fledglings or mate-feeding in passerines. No sign of juvenal plumage, which is distinctively different than other plumages of this species, was observed in any of the six individuals. Although it is possible these six birds represented a family group migrating together, and the behavior observed represented a remnant of the feeding instinct in the parent bird, there is no other evidence to

support this claim, and I am unaware of any passerine species that accompanies and feeds its young on migration. There is also the remote possibility that this species nests on or near Carlos Avery WMA; Roberts listed July observations in the 1920s in Renville and Hennepin counties, but no nesting evidence was discovered and the species has not been reported in southern Minnesota in summer since that time. Many observers were able to observe these Sharp-tailed Sparrows through at least 24 September, but observations after 21 September included only one or two individuals, suggesting that the tight group observed on the day of discovery was not present subsequently. In researching records of this species in southern Minnesota, I was able to find a total of 43 records in both spring and fall migrations since the 1880s. This included checking seasonal reports in ***The Loon*** for the past 20 years, as well as all the records contained within the species file at the Bell Museum of Natural History. As far as I know, this list is all-inclusive. There are 18 fall records spanning this 100-year period (1880s to 1980s), with an average of only 1.8 per decade. There are more fall records in the 1930s and 1940s (seven) than in the 1970s and 1980s (five). Although Janssen (*Birds in Minnesota,* 1987) lists late September as the peak fall migration time for this species, there are more records in mid-October (seven) than in any other 10–day period during the fall migration. The earliest fall record was on 5–6 September, and the latest was on 18 October. Also of interest are the 25 spring records (again limited only to southern Minnesota) since the 1880s, with an average of 2.3 per decade. There are more spring records in the 1920s and 1930s (10) than any other 20-year period. The majority of spring records are in mid and late May (17). Most interesting is the greater number of historical records (1920s to 1940s) than recent records for spring and fall migrations, despite the tremendous increase in observer coverage. Our knowledge of this species in migration has not increased in the last 100 years! Although this research suggests that Sharp-tailed Sparrows have not been overlooked during migration, perhaps intense field work during the peak migration time in suitable habitat could improve our knowledge of this species' distribution. **Karl Bardon, 1430 – 100th Ave. NW, #212, Coon Rapids, MN 55433.**

A LATE OCTOBER HOODED WARBLER IN GRAND MARAIS — On the morning of 20 October 1995, I was more than a little surprised to find a Hooded Warbler *(Wilsonia citrina)* in Grand Marais in Cook County. Barb Akre and I were birding there at the time with temperatures in the 30s, an intermittent rain falling and a strong northeast wind, and given such conditions, along with the date and location, we were not expecting or seeing any warblers other than a few Yellow-rumpeds and Palms. We were mostly seeing small groups of migrant sparrows, Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs, and Horned Larks as we walked into the paved parking lot on the east side of the harbor, when a flash of bright yellow color among some Snow Buntings feeding in a grassy area about 50 feet away caught my eye. Looking through binoculars, I was completely amazed to be seeing an adult male Hooded Warbler in full plumage. The identification was straightforward with the warbler's complete black hood, yellow face and underparts, and greenish back all clearly visible. Also noted was the blackish smudge on the lores, and the white on its outer tail feathers was also seen when the bird flew off after about 30 seconds. We watched it fly towards the west, and we lost sight of it after it landed on a sailboat anchored in the harbor about 50 feet from shore. It presumably flew off unnoticed and continued west across the harbor. I then called Molly and Ken Hoffman, but unfortunately none of us could relocate the bird later in the day. This is one of only a handful of fall records in the state, and to my knowledge, this is the latest date on record, with only one other October record (3 October 1982 in Roches-

ter, Olmsted County; ***The Loon*** 55:30). Apparently, this also represents the first Hooded Warbler for the northeastern quarter of Minnesota, with only two previous records from the northern half of the state: 2 June 1973 in Mille Lacs County (***The Loon*** 45:65) and 14–22 June 1975 in Clearwater County (***The Loon*** 47:143). While I have seen a number of casuals, accidentals, and other rarities in Minnesota over the years, this Hooded Warbler was probably the most unexpected and surprising bird of them all. **Kim Eckert, 8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.**

SABINE'S GULL IN ROSEAU COUNTY — On 16 September 1995 I decided to search for Sabine's Gull in northwestern Minnesota after a cold front moved through the area. The conditions seemed favorable with strong winds from the northwest and mid–September is an optimal time of year, based on dates of previous Minnesota records. I was also aware that seven of North Dakota's twenty records (through Fall 1994) are from the Grand Forks sewage lagoons during September or early October! Perseverance and intestinal fortitude paid off at Warroad, the fifth sewage lagoon on my itinerary. The bird was a juvenile and loosely associated with about 100 Bonaparte's Gulls that were present. It often fed alone in the northeast corner of the southwest lagoon which was more sheltered from the

Juvenile Sabine's Gull, 16 September 1995, Warroad, Roseau County. Photo by Peder Svingen.

wind. Several times it appeared to patter its feet on the surface of the water while feeding, recalling the behavior of a storm–petrel. The identification was easy since I had seen one in Marshall County only ten days earlier! This is the first record of Sabine's Gull in Roseau County and the seventeenth for Minnesota. **Peder Svingen, 2602 E. Fourth St., Duluth, MN 55812–1533.**

ANOTHER CLARK'S GREBE RECORD IN WESTERN MINNESOTA — Ever since

Minnesota's first acceptable Clark's Grebe *(Aechmophorus clarkii)* record occurred in 1986 in Grant County, it has been suspected this species may eventually prove to be of Regular status in the state. Now that observers have become aware of its field marks relative to the more widespread Western Grebe *(A. occidentalis)* and are more actively searching for it, there have now been records in all but two of the past ten years, 1986–1995. Since almost all these records have been in western Minnesota in spring and summer, it came as no great surprise when a group of 23 birders on a Minnesota Birding Weekend observed a Clark's Grebe in Yellow Medicine County on 19 August 1995. The exact location was at Timm Lake in Posen Township (T113N, R39W, Section 34). The grebe was among several adult and young Western Grebes present on the lake and was initially spotted and tentatively identified by Dennis Martin. After locating the grebe, I concurred in the identification, and for the next 20 minutes or so, the entire group was eventually able to see the grebe's distinctive field marks. Although the bird was about a quarter mile away to the north, the conditions for observation were favorable with the late morning sun at our backs and the absence of any distorting heat waves. A variety of spotting scopes were used, with the best views provided by Kowa TSN–4 scopes with a 30X or 40X eyepiece and by a Swarovski ST–80 scope with a 20X–60X zoom eyepiece. The Clark's Grebe yellow-orange bill was clearly and consistently visible at all times, contrasting well with the duller greenish-yellow bills of all the adjacent Western Grebes. Although it was difficult to see whether its eyes were entirely surrounded by white, some of us were barely able to see this. More evident to everyone and just as diagnostic, however, was that the lower edge of the Clark's Grebe dark cap was higher up on the side of the head, and thus its face was more extensively white than on a Western Grebe (see ***The Loon*** 61:101). Its flanks were also extensively whitish and paler than the adjacent Westerns, and when seen from the rear its hindneck stripe was a bit narrower in direct comparison with the Westerns. Only this one adult Clark's Grebe seemed to be present at the time, although it was interesting to note that a half-grown grebe chick of unknown identity seemed to be following the Clark's Grebe around for several minutes. However, at no time was the Clark's seen to feed this chick or pay it any special attention. **Kim Eckert, 8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.**

ICELAND GULL (BASIC II PLUMAGE) AT BLACK DOG LAKE — In late afternoon of

1 December 1995, I discovered a pale immature gull standing on the ice with about 50 Herring Gulls near the west end of Black Dog Lake, Burnsville (Dakota County), and I observed it for 20 minutes at a distance of about 150 m. Overall, the gull appeared uniformly pale creamy grayish tan, superficially similar in color and pattern to that of a typical basic I Glaucous Gull (of which there were at least two elsewhere on the lake), but substantially smaller. It was noticeably smaller than even the smallest of the Herring Gulls, and I estimated it to be about midway in size between Ring-billed Gull (although none were present in this flock for comparison) and Herring Gull. The head was smoothly rounded and the bill was slight, short and delicate — about half the bulk of Herring Gull bills in direct comparison. The bill was black on the distal half and paler brownish gray on the proximal half, and the demarcation between the two tones was gradual, not abrupt. In addition, the black of the distal portion extended farther toward the base on the cutting edge of the mandibles. The general grayish tan body color resulted from predominantly creamy white body feathers with internal grayish brown markings,

although there were some areas on the back and coverts that had mostly solid pale gray feathers. That and the bill pattern led me to conclude that this individual was in basic II plumage rather than basic I. The tertials were mostly creamy white, also with some thin internal grayish brown markings. The primaries were creamy white, each of the four visible ones at least with a grayish-tan subterminal spot. The primaries extended well beyond the tail by almost two bill lengths. The tail was seen best from its ventral side as the gull was preening, and it appeared uniformly pale grayish or grayish tan, without internal markings. The dorsal surface of the tail was visible when the gull flew off to the east and out of sight; its appearance was similar, although the view was more distant — pale grayish tan (apparently without internal markings), virtually concolor with the rump/upper tail coverts and mantle. There was no darker secondary bar in flight; the entire upper surface of the bird was uniformly pale grayish tan with the exception of the outer wing (from wrist to tip), which was even paler (creamier). The eye was dark and the legs dusky pinkish. After about 20 minutes, the gull flew to the east and I was unable to relocate it. To my knowledge, none of the many other observers who visited the lake over the next several days were able to find it either. **Bruce A. Fall, 4300 29th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55406.**

ALBINO BARN SWALLOW IN WINONA COUNTY — A full albino Barn Swallow was discovered among a group of swallows feeding at the Trempealeau Lock and Dam Number 6 on the Mississippi River along the Minnesota-Wisconsin state line. The bird was photographed on several days from 29 August to 5 September 1995 by Sam Nottleman of Winona. The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds listed only two records of albino Barn Swallows previously reported for North America, one a full albino from Benton County, Oregon, and another with dark eyes from New York State. **Dr. Phillip C. Whitford, Biology Department, Capital University, Columbus, OH 43209.**

Albino Barn Swallow, 29 August 1995, Lock and Dam #6, Mississippi River, Winona County. Photo by Sam Nottleman.

Index to Volume 67

This index lists the names of authors and the common names of birds found in the 1995 issues of *The Loon*

Compiled by Robert Janssen, Ann Hertzel and Anthony Hertzel

Corrections to "The Season"

Blue-winged Warbler, 9/26/94 *should be* 8/26/94; **Golden-winged Warbler**, 9/26/94 *should be* 8/26/94; Add: **Green-tailed Towhee,** 12/18/94, (***The Loon***, 67:139–156).

In This Issue

Purpose of the M.O.U.

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.

To carry out these aims, we: publish a magazine, ***The Loon***, and a newsletter, *Minnesota Birding;* conduct field trips; encourage and sponsor the preservation of natural areas; and hold seminars where research reports, unusual observations and conservation discussions are presented. We are supported by dues from members, affiliated clubs and special gifts. The M.O.U. wishes to point out that any or all phases of the M.O.U. program could be expanded significantly with gifts, memorials or bequests willed to the organization.

Suggestions to Authors

The editors of ***The Loon*** welcome submissions of articles, "Notes of Interest" and color or black & white photographs. Submissions should be typed, double-spaced and single-sided. Notes of Interest should be less than two pages. Photographs should be 5"x7". Whenever possible, please include a copy of your submission on any 3 ½ inch computer disk.

Club information and other announcements of general interest should be sent to the Newsletter editors. 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.

printed on recycled paper