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Minnesota's First Glaucous-winged Gull

Karl Bardon

On 19 October 1995, I found an apparent Glaucous-winged Gull *(Larus glaucescens)* near the Burnsville sanitary landfill in Dakota County. Although no access is permitted into the landfill, many of the gulls which feed at this location loaf on the adjacent Our Own Hardware Distribution Center rooftop where they can be efficiently scanned from the shoulder of Highway 13. While searching through the many Herring *(L. argentatus)* and Ring-billed *(L. delawarensis)* Gulls present here at 8:30 A.M., I noticed one large adult gull with gray in the folded primary extension that was as pale as the mantle. Although this indicated a possible Kumlien's Iceland Gull *(L. glaucoides kumlieni)*, I knew this would be an exceptionally early date for an Iceland Gull, and I was immediately impressed with the very large size of this bird, literally standing a head taller than most of the Herring Gulls present, so I began to consider the possibility that it was a Glaucous-winged Gull.

For the next two hours, I was able to study this bird off and on as it moved among the mass of other gulls present. I repeatedly confirmed the dark iris, the very large size (especially the head and bill, which were clearly larger than any adjacent Herring Gull), the slightly darker mantle, and the gray color in the folded primary extension as pale as the mantle or perhaps very slightly darker. These features were all consistent with Glaucous-winged Gull, but it bothered me somewhat that the leading primaries appeared to be entirely whitish, contrasting with the other two visible primaries, each of which had a white crescent shaped tip, and then gray color subterminally. Although not a typical primary pattern for this species, I could remember seeing Glaucous-winged Gulls in late summer in Alaska which showed just such a primary pattern: the leading primaries were heavily worn and had faded to white, while the inner primaries were freshly molted and had the diagnostic subterminal gray marks.

Although the identification seemed superficially easy, going to the phone and alerting other birders of this apparent Glaucous-winged Gull, which I had just found on a rooftop along a busy highway in Burnsville, seemed like too great a leap of faith for any sane birder to make! Once I returned home in the evening, and had a chance to look at references as well as review my slides of Glaucous-winged Gulls, I became almost thoroughly convinced that this identification was correct, but I knew that the documentation and confirmation of this record would need to be done with great care.

By 21–22 October, a number of other observers had a chance to see the Glaucous-winged Gull, and the identification was confirmed as an apparent adult Glaucous-winged Gull in the last stages of primary molt from alternate to basic plumage. Bruce Fall informed me that the whitish leading "three or so" primaries visible in the folded wing were actually the single faded and worn leading primary which had not yet been renewed. At least two outer primaries (P° 8–9) were apparently missing, resulting in only two primaries with subterminal gray marks being visible in the folded wing.

Description

The following description of the bird is based on over 20 sightings from 19 October-late December, including slides taken as close as 20 yards through a Swarovski ST–80 scope with 1100mm adaptor. Also incorporated into this description are original field notes by Peder

Svingen, Bruce Fall and Kim Eckert, phone conversations with Steve Carlson, and additional photos taken by Peder Svingen, Paul Budde and Dave Cahlander. Especially helpful were extensive field notes taken by Bruce Fall, as well as his study of the three Glaucous-winged Gull specimens in the Bell Museum of Natural History, collected in July 1990 at Togiak, Bristol Bay, Alaska (specimen numbers 38644, 38645, and 38657).

Overall size, structure: Appeared very large and bulky in comparison to Herring Gulls, similar to a Glaucous Gull *(L. hyperboreus)*. The Glaucous-winged Gull stood a head taller than all Herring Gulls, with noticeably longer tarsi. Although the head and body were obviously more massive than most Herring Gulls, especially in flight when the larger bulk of the body was most noticeable, the total length of the bird was only about an inch longer than Herring Gulls. The measurements given in Grant (1986) for Glaucous-winged and Herring Gull show complete overlap in wing and tail length, but the measurements for bill and tarsus average larger in Glaucous-winged.

Head shape: Although the line from the base of the bill to the top of the head appeared quite flat, it rose to a point higher above the eye than expected, resulting in a more round headed appearance than is typical for Glaucous-winged Gull.

Primary extension: Judged to be less than the bill length beyond the tail, but this was complicated by the condition of molt in the outer primaries and tail.

Bill: When compared directly to Herring Gulls, appeared similar to slightly longer, and noticeably thicker. The upper mandible was strongly curved, and there was a moderately large swelling at the gonys, but the bill lacked the overall thickness of many Glaucous-winged Gulls, and when not compared directly with Herring Gulls, it often appeared quite thin. The bill color was a deeper, lemon yellow on the distal third, contrasting slightly with the basal portion which was a paler, greenish yellow. The bill was noticeably brighter yellow than most Herring Gulls in October when the bird was discovered, but this color appeared to have faded somewhat by December. There was a red spot on the gonys. A moderately sized black mark on the proximal side of the red gonydeal spot could be seen at close range, and possibly indicates a fourth-winter bird. A prominent vertical mark (vaguely V-shaped) formed on the upper mandible above the mark on the lower mandible by 2 December. This mark had not been present in October and early November when the bird was first observed. Grant (1986) describes a thin "zig-zag" line as appearing across the tip of the bill in basic Glaucous-winged Gulls, and the photo #539 on page 351 is similar to the mark observed on the Minnesota bird.

Head streaking: Became more pronounced as the season progressed. In December, the head streaking was especially dark, forming a heavy wash on the entire head and upper breast. This muddy appearance was noticeably different from that of the Herring Gulls, which showed a more streaked and spotted effect to their head markings. The Glaucous-winged could be picked out from the Herring Gulls by this feature alone. In flight, the streaking on the head and down onto the chest produced a pronounced bibbed effect, with a sharp demarcation between the streaking on the upper chest and the white belly. Although the amount of head streaking is variable in most large gulls, this muddy appearance is typical for Glaucous-winged Gulls, and it is also shared by some Western Gulls, and many hybrid Western X Glaucous-winged Gulls.

Mantle color: In overcast conditions the mantle appeared consistently slightly darker than adjacent Herring Gulls. Grant (1986) describes the mantle color of Glaucous-winged Gulls as varying from slightly darker than North American subspecies of Herring Gull *(L. a. smithsonianus)* to as dark as east Siberian subspecies of Herring Gull *(L. a. vegae)*, which has a mantle color similar to a California Gull *(L. californicus)*. The

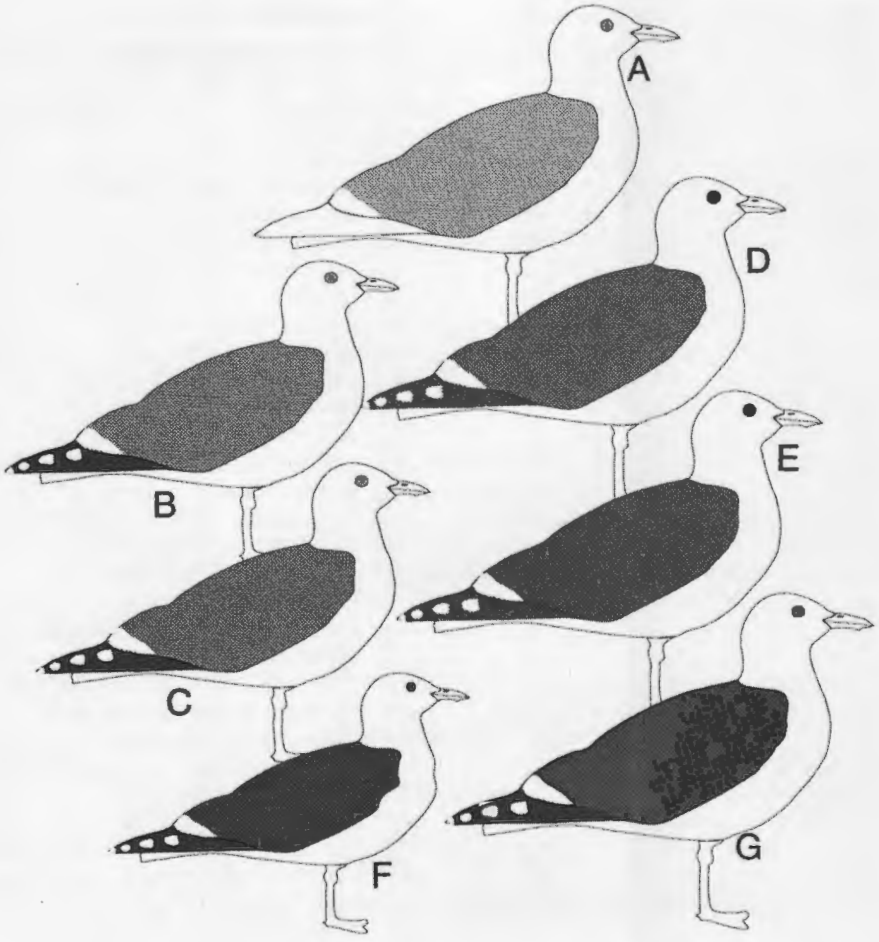

Figure 1. Mantle shades of five species of adult gulls. Bell Museum specimens were matched visually with a gray scale chart in 5% increments of brightness, from 0 (black) to 100% (white). (A) Glaucous Gull #10595 (75–80%); (B) Herring Gull #21918 (70%); (C) Herring Gull #21917 (65%); (D) Glaucous-winged Gull #38657 (55–60%); (E) Glaucous-winged Gull #38644 (50–55%); (F) California Gull #16090 (45–50%); (G) Western Gull #5460 (probably *L. o. wymani*; 25–30%). The Herring Gulls were from Minnesota (June 1966, Lake Co.); the Glaucous-winged Gulls were from Alaska (July 1990, Togiak, Bristol Bay); and the Western Gull was from California (Nov. 1895, San Mateo Co.).

darkest individuals are said to be from the southern part of the breeding range, and the palest from the north. The three Bell Museum of Natural History specimens from Alaska show mantle colors slightly darker than Herring Gull specimens *(L. a. smithsonianus)*, slightly paler than California Gull specimens, and significantly paler than Western Gull specimens (Fig. 1 and 4).

Primary pattern: When the Glaucous-winged Gull was discovered on 19 Octo

ber, only three primaries were visible in the folded wingtip: the worn, whitish outermost primary (P°10), and two others (apparently P°6 and 7). The outermost primary appeared entirely whitish at a distance, but when studied carefully by Bruce Fall, it was seen to be white only on the distal approximately two inches, then very light gray on the remainder. Once the outermost primary was renewed in December, it showed a narrow white tip, a narrow gray subapical band, and a large white mirror about two inches long (Fig. 2). This pattern closely matches published photos I examined, my own slides from Alaska, and Bruce Fall's notes on the three specimens in the Bell Museum of Natural History. The narrow white tip and sometimes the gray subterminal band are often worn off, leaving the appearance of an entirely white tip. The outer primaries (P°6–10) had narrow, crescent-shaped white tips, gray subterminal marks, white subapical mirrors (noted to be present on at least P°6 and 7, and probably present on P°8 and 9 as well), then gray bases. The presence of white mirrors in most or all five outer primaries is in contrast to Grant (1986) who states that Glaucous-winged Gulls show a large white mirror on the outermost primary (P°10), often a smaller mirror on P°9, and rarely one on P°8. My slides from Alaska, and Bruce Fall's notes on the Bell Museum specimens show subapical mirrors in all five outer primaries, again with the exception of the outermost (Fig. 3). The gray subterminal marks on the outer primaries appeared similar to slightly darker than the color of the mantle, varying with the conditions in which the bird was observed. When seen at very close range, they appeared a slightly browner gray than the bluer gray color in the mantle, which is true of the Bell Museum specimens as well. In flight, the dorsal wing surface appeared a uniform gray from wingtip to wingtip. Ventrally, the primaries appeared very white, with the dorsal gray subterminal marks showing through as very pale gray, contrasting slightly with the white tips.

Tail: White. Two small pale gray smudges present on 2 December, and by 16 December, only a single subterminal smudge on the right central rectrix remained. One of the Bell Museum specimens had similar marks on several rectrices, but otherwise appeared fully adult.

Iris: Always appeared conspicuously dark in comparison to Herring Gulls. Even at very close range in excellent light there was no contrast between black pupil and black iris. The eye appeared relatively small in comparison to the overall bill and head size. Although not observed in the field, one slide taken on 8 November shows dark red surrounding the eye, representing the orbital ring color. A suggestion of this color was also seen on 16 December. According to Weber (1981), typical Glaucous-winged Gulls show purple or magenta orbital rings, while Western, Herring (North American subspecies), and Glaucous Gulls all show yellow to orange orbital rings. Although Grant states that the orbital ring color may become paler or yellowish in winter, other features of this bird in October and early November were indicative of molt from alternate to basic plumage (amount of head streaking, brighter bill color, primary molt, etc.).

Legs: Noticeably darker pink than most Herring Gulls, especially the feet.

Condition of molt: This bird was apparently nearing the end of its primary molt, which, as in most birds, progresses from the innermost (P°1) to the outermost (P°10). As described, the outermost primary on both sides was heavily worn when the bird was discovered on 19 October. On 31 October, the gull had lost the outermost primary on the right side, and by 5 November it lacked both outermost primaries, giving it a very short-winged appearance (only two primaries fully visible in the folded wingtip at this point). By 14 November, additional primaries could be seen molting in when the wing was slightly spread, but the new outermost primary was judged to be still only about two inches long. By 16 December, the outermost primary (P°10)

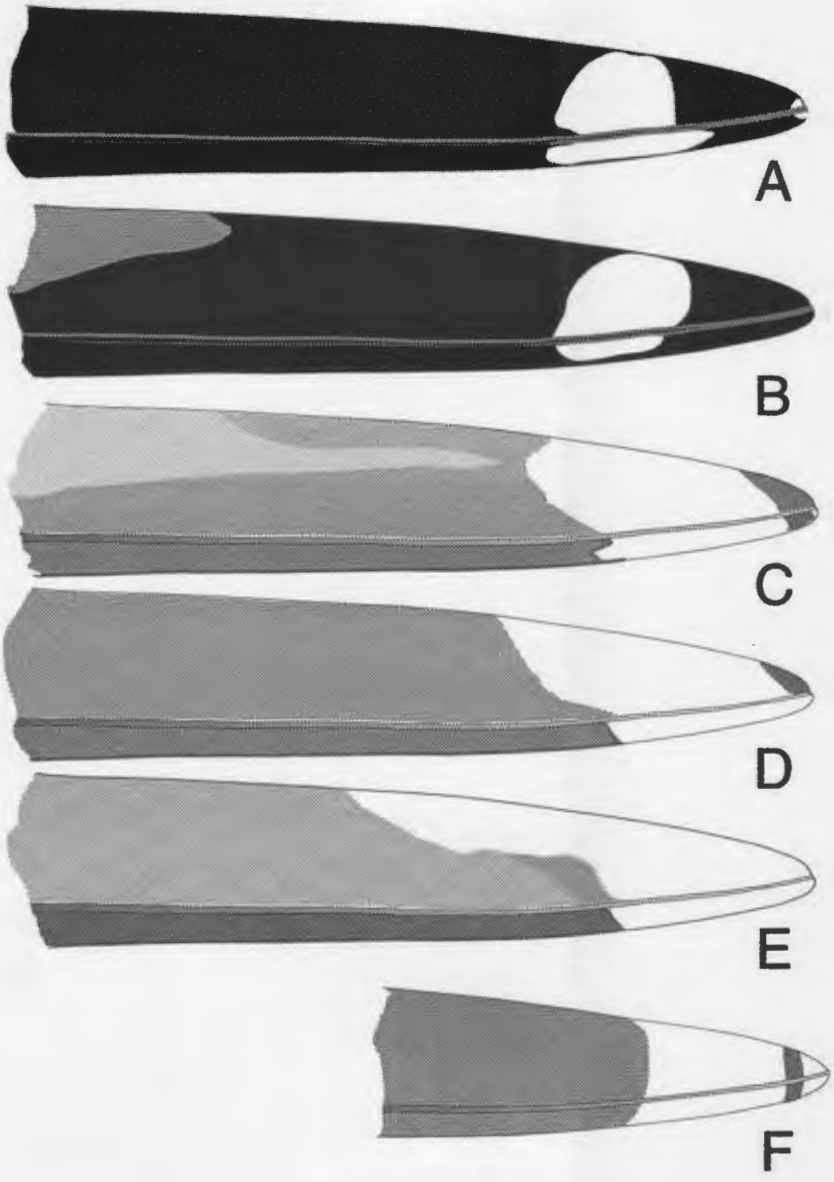

Figure 2. Pattern of outer (tenth) primary tip of three species of adult gulls, drawn from specimens in Bell Museum. (A) Western Gull #3626; (B) Herring Gull #21916; (C) Glaucous-winged Gull #38657; (D) Glaucous-winged Gull #38645; (E) Glaucous-winged Gull #38644; (F) Glaucous-winged Gull, redrawn from field sketch made 15 December 1995 at Black Dog Lake, Dakota County (pattern and shade approximate).

was still an inch or more shorter than P°9, (P°10 is normally slightly longer than P°9 when fully grown). This gull was also missing approximately two of the outermost secondaries in late October and early November. And finally, as seen on 7 and 14 November, the tail was also molting. There was an indentation of one to two inches representing approximately two feathers immediately inward from the outermost retrix on both sides of the tail. By early December, the tail was completely molted.

Identification

The combination of characteristics observed on this apparent Glaucous-winged Gull rule out all other species of gulls. Although superficially similar in primary pattern and coloration, Kumlien's Iceland Gull is easily eliminated by its much smaller size and more delicate structure, as well as its paler mantle. Other species of gull are eliminated for obvious reasons.

Since many species of large, white-headed gulls often hybridize, various hybrid combinations known to be produced and reported in North America were considered as possible explanations for the combination of features observed on the Minnesota bird. Although most hybrids show characteristics intermediate between both parents, some hybrids may show features not present in either parent (Sibley 1995), and some of the more frequent hybrid combinations may show all range of variation between the two parent species as a result of subsequent backcrossing. As a result, hybrid parentage may never be completely ruled out.

Herring X Glaucous Gull hybrids are known from breeding colonies in Iceland (Ingolfsson 1970) and the MacKenzie Delta, Canada (Spear 1987). Individuals have been reported from the nonbreeding season in a number of areas, including a first-winter individual in Minnesota (***The Loon*** 66:196–97). Although adult individuals could conceivably have a primary pattern and pigmentation superficially similar to a Glaucous-winged Gull, none of the examples shown by Ingolfsson (1970) were similar. As expected, all the adults examined by Spear (1987) had yellow irides. Also, Glaucous X Herring hybrids would presumably not have a darker mantle than either parent species, as was shown by the Minnesota Glaucous-winged Gull.

Glaucous and Glaucous-winged Gulls apparently interbreed in western Alaska (Strang 1977). Although the large stature and the initial presence of a whitish outermost primary on the Minnesota gull originally suggested this hybrid combination, the larger than Herring Gull size is consistent with Glaucous-winged Gull, and the whitish outermost primary was white because of excessive wear. When renewed, the outermost primary showed a typical Glaucous-winged Gull pattern (Fig. 2). Obvious hybrid Glaucous X Glaucous-winged Gulls would probably have primaries slightly paler than the mantle, and would probably not have a darker mantle than Herring Gull.

Hybrid Glaucous-winged X Western Gulls are especially prevalent on the Pacific Coast, where some mixed colonies in Oregon and Washington contain more intergrades than pure individuals (Hoffman *et al.* 1978). Recognizable hybrids would probably have a darker mantle and darker coloration in the dorsal outer primaries than observed on the Minnesota bird.

Herring and Glaucous-winged Gulls interbreed at many colonies in south central and southeastern Alaska (Williamson and Peyton 1963, Patten and Weisbrod 1974), where these two species show complete intergradation in primary feather coloration. An illustration in Williamson and Peyton (1963) shows a series of primary patterns ranging from typical Glaucous-winged to typical Herring; the only example which fits the Minnesota bird is the typical Glaucous-winged Gull. All other specimens shown had at least some darker gray in the outer primaries which was clearly darker than the remainder of the wing. The Bell Museum of Natural History Glaucous-winged Gull specimens taken at Togiok, Alaska,

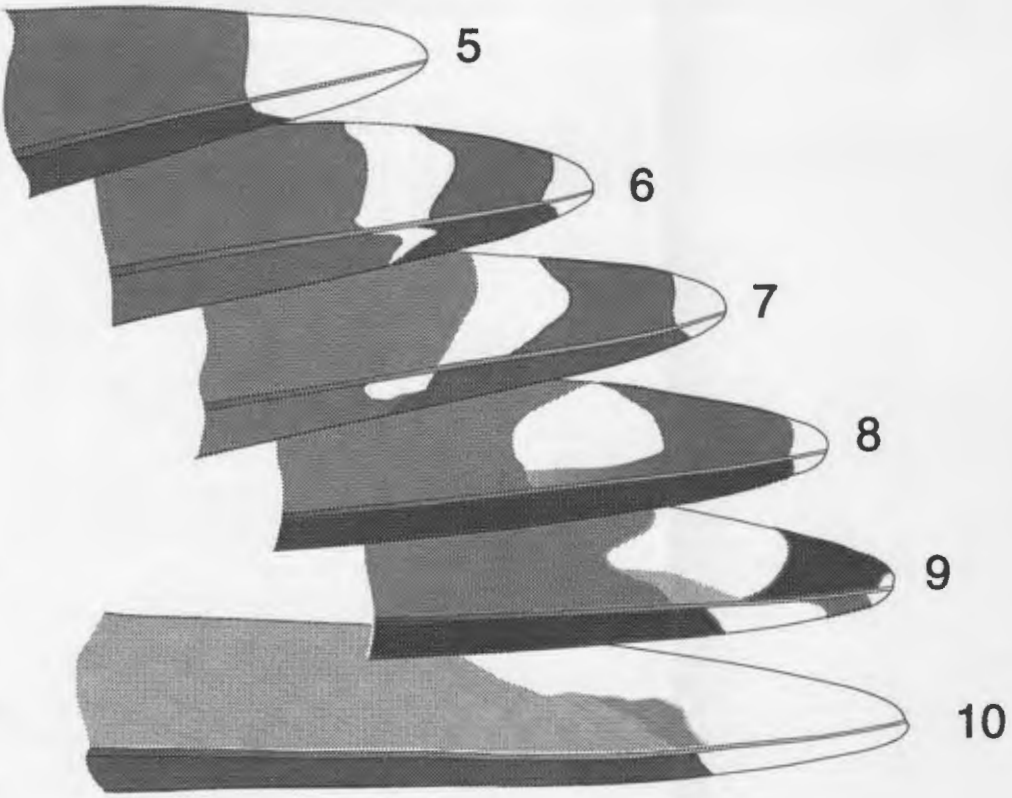

Figure 3. Pattern and shade of outer six primary tips (primaries 5–10) of Glaucous-winged Gull #38644 (adult female, 12 July 1990, Togiak, Bristol Bay, Alaska). Primaries 6–10 were old and worn, from the previous year; primary 5 was new and still growing in.

and used for comparative purposes in this analysis, were collected outside the known zone of hybridization with Herring Gull, but within possible overlap in range with Glaucous Gull (Strong 1977).

Slides and a written description of the Glaucous-winged Gull were sent to Paul Lehman, Rich Stallcup, Guy McCaskie, Dan Svingen, Steve Heinl and Dennis Paulson for review. Although all authorities agreed this bird appeared to be a Glaucous-winged Gull, both Lehman and McCaskie had reservations about the relatively thin appearance to the bill and the roundness of the head. Since these two features appeared atypical for Glaucous-winged Gull, McCaskie noted that many hybrid Herring X Glaucous-winged Gulls exist, and Lehman suggested the Minnesota bird might be this hybrid combination backcrossed with a Glaucous-winged Gull one or more times as a possible explanation for the thin bill and round head. Lehman was also initially uncomfortable with what he considered to be the darker than average primary coloration, and although he indicated that this feature was still within the acceptable range for Glaucous-winged Gull, he suggested this might be further evidence of Herring Gull ancestry in the bird's past. Heinl, from experience with Glaucous-

winged X Herring Gull hybrids in southeastern Alaska, felt that there was no reason to suspect hybridization.

The Minnesota Glaucous-winged Gull did often appear to have a relatively thin bill and round head, but when the bill was compared directly with Herring Gulls in the field, it appeared noticeably thicker and slightly longer, and several of the photos show the head as appearing quite flat (although these photos are at an odd angle). In most large gulls, the bill appears thinner and the head rounder in the smaller females. Figure 5 compares the bills of male and female Herring Gull specimens with a female Glaucous-winged Gull specimen. The female Glaucous-winged Gull bill measurements (culmen and depth) were both slightly shorter and narrower than the male Herring Gull. Heinl indicated that the size of the bill and the head shape shown on the Minnesota gull were "well within the range exhibited by Glaucous-winged Gull and not indicative of hybridization."

The coloration of the outer primaries was entirely consistent with published photographs and descriptions (Grant 1986), and the Bell Museum specimens. The subapical mirrors present in all or most of the five outer primaries, and the large white mirror in the outermost primary with only a narrow band separating it from the white tip appear to be unique to this species (Fig. 2). By contrast, most adult Western *(L. occidentalis)* and Herring Gulls show a smaller subapical mirror on the outermost primary, and a wider black band separating the white mirror from the white tip (Fig. 2). Both Western Gull (usually one) and Herring Gull (usually two) show fewer white mirrors in the outer primaries than Glaucous-winged Gull.

Primary coloration appears to be the most useful feature for identifying several of the large gull hybrids. Williamson and Peyton (1963), in discussing Herring X Glaucous-winged Gull hybrids, felt that the black primary coloration of Herring Gull was dominant and tended to mask the pale coloration of Glaucous-winged, while Ingolfsson (1970), in discussing hybrid Glaucous X Herring Gulls, felt that the outermost primary was the most sensitive to variation. Therefore, it seems likely that any obvious hybrid Herring X Glaucous-winged Gull would show at least some darker gray or black coloration in the outer primaries, especially the outermost, which was clearly lacking in the Minnesota bird. Heinl also indicated that he would not suspect hybridization with Herring Gull until there was some element of very dark gray on the leading edge of the outer primaries contrasting noticeably with the base of those feathers.

Despite the often thin appearance to the bill and round looking head, I believe enough other characteristics were clearly visible to separate this individual from all Herring Gulls, and to indicate a pure Glaucous-winged Gull. The slightly but distinctly darker mantle, the obviously larger size and bulkier build, the dark red orbital ring, the completely dark iris, the development of a thin "zig-zag" line on the upper mandible, the darker pink legs, the gray primaries similar in shade or slightly darker than the mantle, and the pattern of subapical spots in most of the outer primaries are all characteristic of Glaucous-winged Gull in comparison to Herring Gull. In the absence of further characteristics indicating hybrid parentage, there seems to be no compelling reason to suspect hybridization.

Daily occurence, activity pattern and movements

The Glaucous-winged Gull remained in the Twin Cities area for a total of over two months, from 19 October to 24 December, during which time it was seen by numerous observers at a variety of locations. This bird's initial presence at the Burnsville Landfill, Dakota County from 19–21 October resulted in immediate speculation that it would be seen at Lakes Calhoun and Harriet, Hennepin County, where most of the gulls which feed at the landfill roost for the night. As expected, Steve Carlson discovered the bird at Lake Calhoun on 22 October at

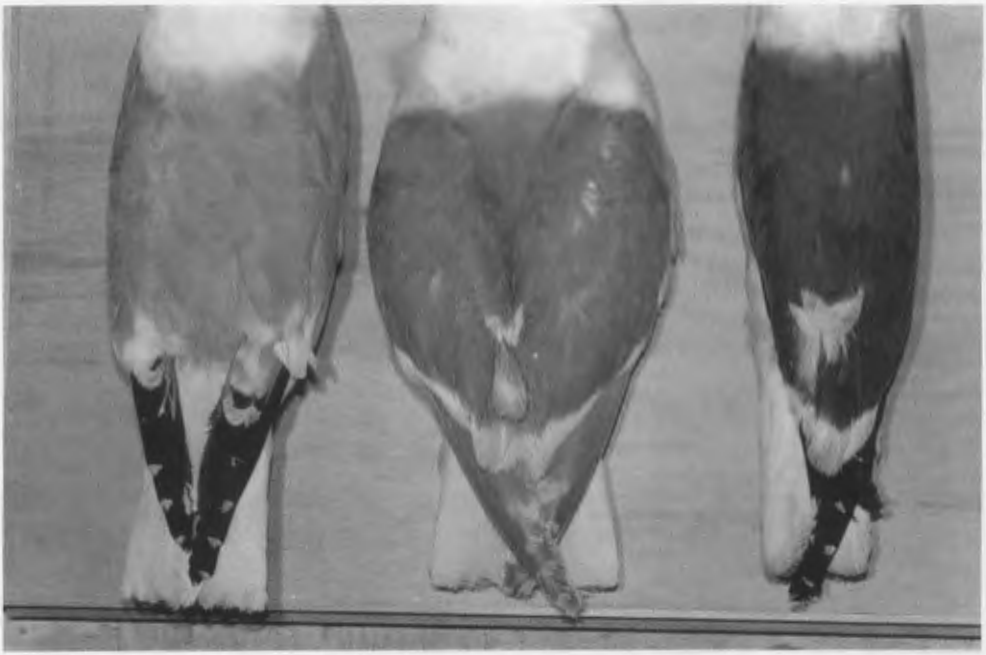

Figure 4: Mantle shades of adults of three species of gulls (left to right): Herring Gull #21916; Glaucous-winged Gull #38644; Western Gull #3626 (probably *L. o. wymani;* collected 11/21/1893, San Diego Bay, Calif., adult male). Photo by Bruce Fall.

5:00 P.M., and it was seen there again on the evenings of 23 and 25 October. These are the only dates the gull was reported at Lake Calhoun on the evening roost. The dozens of birders who attempted to see the gull on subsequent evenings at Lakes Calhoun and Harriet were disappointed; at least one observer made more than a dozen attempts to see the bird at this location without success! Although the Glaucous-winged Gull continued to feed at the Burnsville Landfill, as evidenced by sightings there on 2 and 6 November, it proved equally difficult to see at this location.

Interestingly, the Glaucous-winged Gull began to be seen in the mornings at Lakes Calhoun and Harriet, suggesting that it was indeed still roosting at the city lakes. It was seen leaving Lakes Calhoun or Harriet on eight out of nine mornings from 31 October to 8 November. Often initially discovered on Lake Calhoun at first light, the bird had the habit of remaining on the south shore of Lake Calhoun or near the small sandspit on the southwest end of Lake Harriet for an hour or more after sunrise. Its departure time varied from 6:40 to 8:30 A.M. Although it is possible the gull came onto Lake Calhoun (the preferred roost site for Herring Gulls at this time of year) too late in the evening to be seen, several of us often stayed at the lake until after dark, when the raft of Herring Gulls which roost near the west shore of the lake were still visible and identifiable.

A cold snap on 10 November resulted in a great reduction in the number of gulls using Lakes Calhoun and Harriet, and I presumed the bird was gone until Tony Hertzel reported to me that an observer had seen the gull on the ice at Lake of the Isles, just north of Lake Calhoun. I observed the bird there on 14 November, but this proved to be the last

sighting for two weeks.

The Glaucous-winged Gull was not seen again until 1 December when Bruce Fall relocated it at Black Dog Lake. The roosting and feeding locations used by the gull during this two-week hiatus remain unknown. Once rediscovered at Black Dog Lake, the Glaucous-winged Gull remained relatively easy to locate as it fed at the west spillway, loafed on the lake ice, or roosted with the other gulls on the east side of the lake, and many observers who had not previously seen the bird were afforded excellent views. There were many days in December, however, in which the Glaucous-winged Gull and most other gulls which had roosted on Black Dog Lake quickly departed at dawn and could not be found loafing or feeding at the Pine Bend and Burnsville landfills, or at the Mississippi River in St. Paul, the only locations where gulls are known to feed this late in the season. Clearly, we do not know all there is to know about gulls roosting and feeding areas in the Twin Cities!

Interestingly, the Glaucous-winged Gull was one of the last gulls to depart the Twin Cities region. On 1–2 December, as many as 3000–4000 Herring Gulls were present at Black Dog Lake, but by 5 December this number had been sharply reduced to only 900 gulls, and on 14 December only 280 gulls remained. On 24 December, the last date the Glaucous-winged Gull was observed, as few as 125 gulls remained at this location.

Distributional summary of extralimital records

Although historically restricted to the Pacific Coast, the Glaucous-winged Gull has been undergoing a recent inland expansion. Binford and Johnson (1995) list 97 records of Glaucous-winged Gulls for interior states and provinces in North America through 1993, including 26 records east of the Rocky Mountains in Alberta (14 records), Saskatchewan (9–16 November 1991), Montana (four records), Colorado (five records), Manitoba (one specimen collected 1 June 1964), Oklahoma (one specimen collected 15 February 1912), and Illinois (first-winter bird present in Chicago from 27 November-12 December 1992). This trend became noticeable in the 1970s, and beginning in 1988–89, inland sightings have increased significantly. Recent sightings since Binford and Johnson's summary or records still under review by state records committees include sightings in North Dakota (30 September–4 November 1990 at Garrison Dam) and Nebraska (12–15 April 1995 at McConaughy Reservoir). Although the first Glaucous-winged Gulls arrive in coastal southern California in late September and early October (Paul Lehman, personal communication), fall migration of Glaucous-winged Gulls begins in most inland areas in late October. The 19 October arrival date for the Minnesota bird is a few days earlier than any other inland state or province except Alberta. The majority of Glaucous-winged Gulls recorded from the interior have been first-winter individuals (70%), with only 10% adults (Binford and Johnson 1995). Because of continued vagrancy of Glaucous-winged Gulls into the interior, additional records in Minnesota can be expected.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Steve Carlson and Kim Eckert who reviewed the manuscript and provided field information about the gull. I would also like to thank the many authorities who reviewed the photographs and a written description, and provided their expert opinions: Steve Heinl, Paul Lehman, Guy McCaskie, Dennis Paulson, Rich Stallcup, and Dan Svingen. Steve Heinl and Paul Lehman also read a copy of the manuscript and saved me from several oversights. John Morley provided access to the Burnsville Landfill on 24 October 1996, and John Klicka provided access to the Bell Museum of Natural History collection.

I would like to give a special thanks to Bruce Fall who donated the use of his scrupulous field notes, examined and photographed the specimens at the Bell Museum, prepared the figures used in

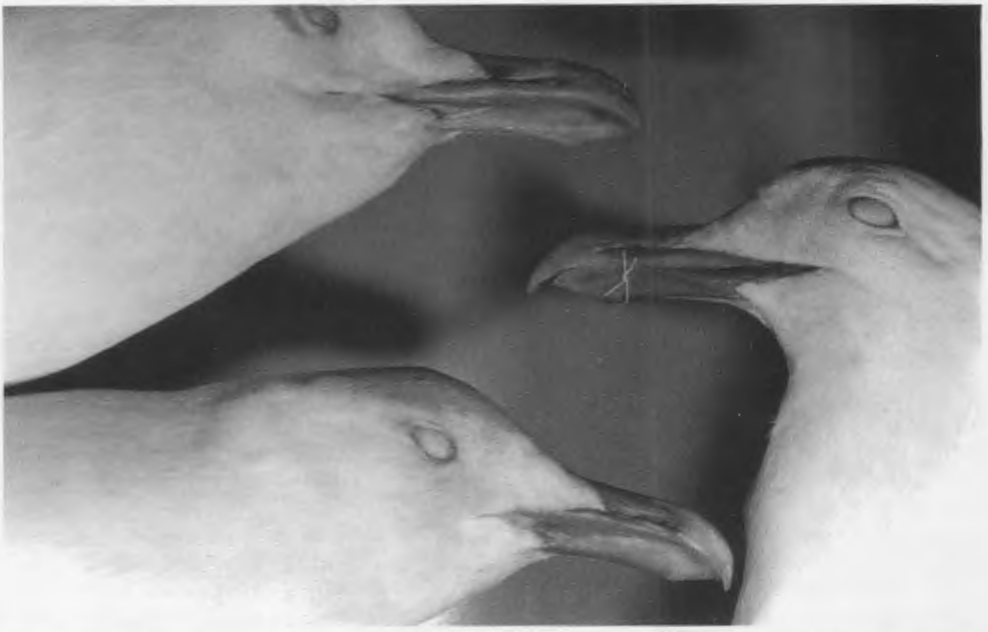

Figure 5: Comparative bill shapes: Herring Gull #21918 male (top left); Herring Gull #21916 female (bottom left); Glaucous-winged Gull #38644 female (right). Photo by Bruce Fall.

this paper, reviewed the manuscript, and offered professional advice throughout the presence of the Glaucous-winged as well as the preparation of this paper. Without his help, the documentation and publication of this new species of gull for Minnesota would have been considerably inferior.

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Gull Migration in the Twin Cities

Karl Bardon

Gulls are gaining increasing popularity among birders. The challenges they present in identification, their propensity to wander, the high proportion of possible rarities, their conspicuous, gregarious nature, and increases in continental population for many species have all certainly played a role in this regard. Although Duluth and the North Shore of Lake Superior have long been the traditional areas for gull watching in Minnesota, the Twin Cities is emerging as an equally exciting place to view large numbers of many species, especially in late fall and early winter when Lakes Calhoun and Harriet and Black Dog Lake regularly host thousands of Herring Gulls, both Glaucous and Thayer's Gulls, as well as other species such as Iceland and Lesser Black-backed Gulls. Nowhere else in the state have eight species of gulls been seen at one time in one place, as happened at Black Dog Lake on 5 December 1988 (***The Loon*** 61:3–4), and again on 1 December 1995 (***The Loon*** 67:248–249). Increased interest in gulls, and apparent increases in numbers of gulls migrating through the Twin Cities area, has resulted in a dramatic change in status for most species of gulls in the Twin Cities during the past ten years. But despite this apparent keen interest in such a highly visible group of birds, there is virtually no information available on the current population size, daily movement patterns, and habitat requirements of this migratory population.

Methods

I studied gull migration in the Twin Cities region from 1990–95. Observations increased from 1990 when I regularly checked only a few roost locations, until 1993, when I watched gulls at least a few hours virtually every day throughout the Twin Cities area. I made only limited observations in 1994 (I was gone from 18 April–16 September 1994, and 16 October 1994–22 January 1995), but resumed more intensive observation in 1995. I also made limited observations prior to 1990, mostly in Ramsey County. Most observations centered around locating all communal roosting locations of gulls in the five-county metro area, including most of Ramsey, Anoka, Washington, Hennepin, and Dakota Counties (Fig. 1). I noted flight directions on and off the roosts, and attempted to locate all major loafing and feeding areas. I conducted regular censuses at these roost locations, but coverage increased as I discovered new roosts, and varied between seasons and years. For example, in 1992 and 1993 I conducted censuses at six roost locations about once every ten days throughout the fall migrations; in 1993 and 1994, when all roosts were believed to have been discovered, I censused all known sites at the peak of Ring-billed Gull migration in late September and early October; and in the fall of 1995, I concentrated my effort on Lakes Calhoun and Harriet and Black Dog Lake. Also incorporated into this paper are periodic observations along the Mississippi River just south of the Twin Cities near Red Wing and Lake City, including Lake Pepin, Goodhue and Wabasha counties.

I made all counts from the shore of lakes either at dawn before the birds departed, or in the evening when the gulls had returned. Most counts were by groups of five, but occasionally at very

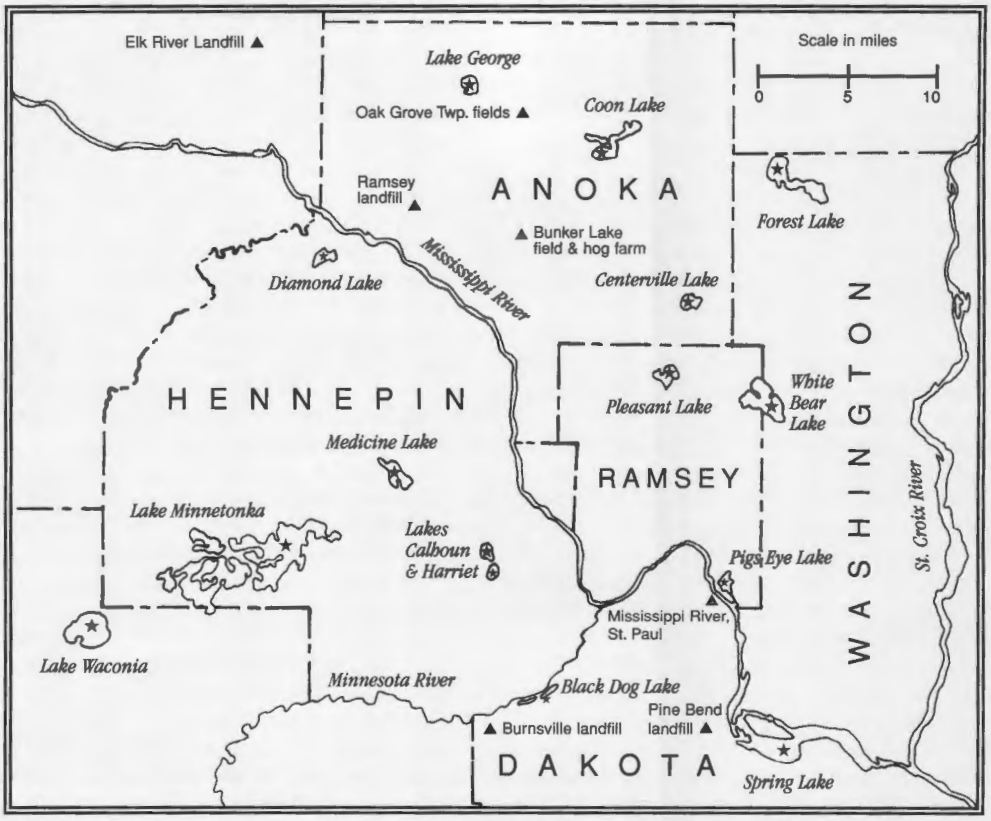

Figure 1. Locations of roost sites (★) and major feeding areas (▲) of gulls in the Twin Cities area.

large roosts when little time was available, I counted in groups of ten or 100. Counting every single bird is usually not practical, especially for larger roosts, since there is such a narrow window of daylight in which the entire roost is visible. For example, it would take over an hour to individually count 5000 gulls, but such a raft is often visible on the water for half that time or less.

In addition to my own observations, I analyzed seasonal reports in ***The Loon*** dating from 1950 to 1995, and examined all the gull species files at the Bell Museum of Natural History. I also solicited unpublished sightings and clarification of published sightings from various local observers. Collection of this data assisted in establishing the status of all gulls recorded in the Twin Cities area. All sightings summarized within this paper are the author's unless otherwise noted.

Results

Gulls in the Twin Cities area depend on three major ecological components: a food source, a diurnal loafing area, and a nocturnal roosting site. Virtually all gulls that migrate through the Twin Cities area apparently gather at communal roosts in the evening, then fly out to local loafing and feeding areas at dawn. All known roosts and most major feeding and loafing areas regularly used by 500 or more gulls are listed in Table 1. Although the flight directions and associated feeding and loafing areas listed are the primary sites for each roost, other minor sites ex

ist, and there is often interchange between these described areas. Many gulls shift feeding and roosting areas as the season progresses and as certain areas become untenable. In some cases, the loafing and feeding areas for particular roosts remain unknown.

Feeding Areas: Most of the larger concentrations of gulls in the Twin Cities area center around a number of local landfills (Table 1). Impressive numbers now also use the agricultural fields near Lake George in Oak Grove Township, northern Anoka County where a food waste recycling program is underway. Here, restaurant and grocery store waste is fed to thousands of hogs, then spread on local fields as fertilizer. The variety of other situations capitalized on by foraging gulls (especially Ring-billed Gulls) is impressive. This includes local beaches and parks where the gulls depend on handouts, restaurant parking lots where they feed on garbage, and agricultural fields where they feed on invertebrates turned over by plows. Also, many Herring and Ring-billed Gulls feed like terns by diving head-first after small fish, and parasitize fish-eating birds like Double-crested Cormorants, American White Pelicans, and Common and Hooded Mergansers. Many gulls (especially Franklin's Gulls) are often seen hawking insects in the air.

Loafing Areas: The loafing areas provide a place where gulls can rest out of the water but still have relative safety. Areas used include lake ice, sandbars, beaches, sod farms, golf courses, plowed fields, or even the roofs of large buildings. Many gulls loaf directly at the feeding site (e.g., at landfills). Occasionally gulls will also spend time loafing on the water of lakes during the day, but they generally do not prefer to do so. Many gulls fly directly to the loafing site at dawn, where they sleep and preen for 30–60 minutes or more before flying to the feeding areas. Most loafing areas lie within one to two miles of the feeding area. Since many gulls appear to spend considerably more time loafing than actually feeding, the importance of loafing areas should not be underestimated. For example, non-breeding Herring Gulls forage 2–3 hours per day, and spend the remainder resting, sleeping and preening (Pierotti and Good 1994). Loafing, or "clubbing" areas have been previously recognized by Shreiber (1967), and Cooke and Ross (1972).

Roosting Areas: Roosting gulls clearly choose the largest lakes available, as well as the widest and deepest expanse on each lake (Fig. 1). Most roost locations likely developed around available food resources, since roosts are often the closest available lake to the feeding area. For example, the Ring-billed Gulls feeding at the Pine Bend landfill fly only five miles to the Spring Lake roost, the gulls feeding on food waste in fields in northern Anoka County fly only three miles to the Lake George roost, and gulls formerly feeding at the landfill in Ramsey, Anoka County, flew four miles to the Diamond Lake roost. But gulls often fly greater distances to what are apparently preferred sites. For example, most of the Ring-billed Gulls feeding at the Burnsville landfill fly ten miles north to Lakes Calhoun and Harriet rather than roosting at Black Dog Lake only two to four miles away. The basin of Black Dog Lake may be too shallow and narrow to offer enough protection to thousands of roosting Ring-billed Gulls. However, many Herring Gulls and a smaller number of other species use this lake as a roost in late fall, especially after Lakes Calhoun and Harriet have frozen. Likewise, hundreds of Ring-billed Gulls feeding less than a mile from Bunker Lake, Anoka County, fly 11 miles to Centerville Lake (as well as greater distances to other roosts). Interestingly, Bunker Lake is a suitable diurnal loafing site for gulls, but apparently too small to be suitable as a nocturnal roost site. Most of the larger lakes in the Twin Cities area are currently used by roosting gulls.

Maximum distances traveled: Gulls appear to regularly travel great distances from roosts to feeding areas. In Decem

Roost Location	Number	Direction	Feeding Area	Loafing Area
Lake Waconia	15,000	various	local fields	local fields
		W	McLeod County landfill	local fields, gravel pit, etc.
Lake George	15,000	E	local fields (Oak Grove Twp)	local fields, Lake George
Lakes Calhoun/ Harriet	12,000	S	Burnsville landfill	Black Dog Lake Our Own Hardware building
		N	various areas in Anoka and northern Hennepin Counties, incl. Lake George area fields	Coon Rapids Dam, others
Spring Lake	10,000	W	Pine Bend landfill	Shiely Gravel Pits, Spring Lake sandbars
Diamond Lake	8,000	E	Ramsey landfill (now closed)	Mississippi R. sandbar
		N	Elk River landfill	local fields
		various	local fields	local fields
Black Dog Lake	3,000	W	Burnsville landfill	Black Dog Lake Our Own Hardware building
		E	Mississippi River, St. Paul	Mississippi River, St. Paul
Lk Minnetonka (Brown's Bay)	3,000	NW, NE	unknown	unknown
Coon Lake	3,000	W	Lake George area fields	local fields
Forest Lake	3,000	SW	unknown (Bunker Lake area?)	
Pigs Eye Lake	3,000	N	Bunker Lake & Lake George areas	
White Bear Lake	1,500	S-SE	unknown	unknown
Pleasant Lake	1,500	W	various	various
Centerville Lake	1,000	NW	Bunker Lake field & hog farm	sod farms, golf course, etc.
Medicine Lake	1,000	N	unknown (same as Calhoun?)	unknown

Table 1. Roost locations, maximum number of gulls observed at each roost, major directions of flight off the roosts, and primary feeding and loafing areas in each direction. Only sites regularly used by 500 or more gulls are listed.

ber 1993, when other roost locations had frozen, hundreds of Herring Gulls and a smaller number of Ring-billed Gulls were documented making a daily flight from the roost at Lakes Calhoun and Harriet 28 miles north to fields in northern Anoka County. Many individuals, including a first-winter Iceland Gull (***The Loon*** 66:102–3) and several Glaucous Gulls, were followed by road from the feeding area in northern Anoka County south to the Coon Rapids Dam where they loafed before continuing south toward Lakes Calhoun and Harriet (the only open water in the direction of their flight). Herring Gulls are also suspected of having made daily flights from Lakes Calhoun and Harriet 22 miles north to the landfill at Ramsey, Anoka County, and 32 miles north to the Elk River landfill, Sherburne

County. During early spring migration before other lakes are open, many Ring-billed and a smaller number of Herring Gulls regularly travel distances ranging from 24–43 miles from roosts at Pigs Eye Lake and Spring Lake north to feeding areas near Bunker Lake and Lake George. Weber (1981) mentioned that hundreds of wintering gulls flew 28 miles daily from the Columbia River, Washington to the Walla Walla dump. Herring Gulls forage up to 60 miles from colonies (Pierotti and Good 1994).

Species Accounts

Of the 19 species of gulls recorded in Minnesota, 13 have been recorded in the Twin Cities during fall migration, and ten have been seen during spring migration. Only six of these species can be considered regular in the Twin Cities.

Gull numbers fluctuate widely between the seasons, with over 50,000 gulls of all species passing through during fall migration (1993 and 1994), and up to 25,000 in spring migration (1994). Ring-billed Gulls predominate during both seasons. Only a small number of Ring-billed Gulls are present in mid-summer, and there are currently no documented nesting records of any species of gull in the Twin Cities area. Gulls are generally absent from mid-January to mid-February. Occasionally a few Ring-billed or Herring Gulls are seen at Black Dog Lake or the Mississippi River in St. Paul during this time, but their status remains accidental in mid-winter, with only two documented overwintering records (1970–71 and 1992–93).

Franklin's Gull *(Larus pipixcan)*

Fall: Large numbers of this western species move eastward into the Twin Cities each fall, with a variable peak from late September to mid-October. Counts of over 5000 birds have been made as early as 14 September and as late as 22 October. Lake Waconia is a focal point for this species with counts as high as 7000 birds (13 October 1994). The highest count in the Twin Cities was 8000 birds at Lake Calhoun on 12 October 1995. Concentrations of 2000–6000 are regularly seen on Diamond Lake, northern Hennepin County. Other counts of over 1000 birds have been made at Black Dog Lake, White Bear Lake, and Lake Minnetonka. These flocks are often quite erratic and unpredictable in occurrence. For example, 5000 were present on the roost at Lake Calhoun on 6 October 1990, but

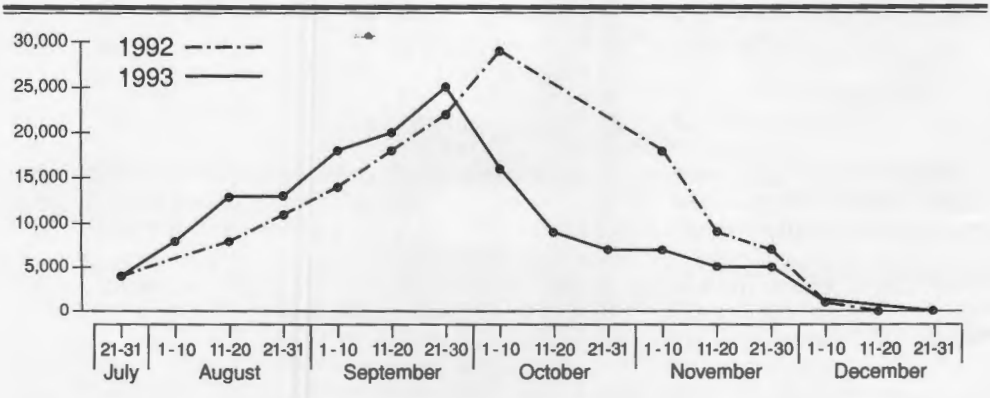

Figure 2. Combined totals of ten day counts at six selected roosts (Diamond, Calhoun/Harriet, Spring, Forest, White Bear and Pleasant Lakes) of Ring-billed Gulls in the Twin Cities, 1992–93. No counts taken in mid- and late October 1992.

Year	Census dates	Diamond	Calhoun	Spring	Forest	White Bear	Pleasant	Total
1990	9/25-10/6	3,000	3,000	—	800	1,300	600	
1991	9/27-10/7	2,500	6,000	3,000	1,500	450	1,100	14,900
1992	9/26-10/9	5,000	12,000	10,000	700	1,500	200	29,400
1993	9/23-9/30	5,000	9,000	6,000	3,000	900	1,200	26,100
1994	10/4-10/13	200	9,000	6,000	3,000	800	100	19,100

Table 2. Counts of Ring-billed Gulls at six roosts during the peak of fall migration for each year, 1990–94. Numbers listed were highest counts for each lake during the census period. 1990 Forest Lake count provided by William Longley. Lake Calhoun count includes Lake Harriet. No census taken at Spring Lake in 1990.

none were present at the following evening's roost.

Spring: Although Janssen (1987) lists this species as casual to accidental in spring in the east, its status during this season could be more accurately described as rare but regular. There has been at least one eastern record in each of the past ten years (from seasonal reports in ***The Loon***). In the past three years in the Twin Cities area, I saw one individual in 1993, two in 1994, and three in 1995, most of which occurred with the large numbers of Ring-billed Gulls at Bunker Lake and Lake George, Anoka County.

Bonaparte's Gull *(Larus ridibundus)*

Fall: This species is only a rare fall migrant in the Twin Cities area. I recorded only nine observations in the last five years, with an average of two per year. Most sightings were of single birds. In contrast, flocks of 100–200 individuals, sometimes more, are common in northern Minnesota at large lakes and sewage lagoons, especially Mille Lacs Lake, which lies only 90 miles north of the Twin Cities. Perhaps the scarcity of sightings in the Twin Cities can be attributed to the lack of sewage lagoons and very large lakes.

Spring: Bonaparte's Gulls are more common in the Twin Cities in spring than in fall, with a peak in late April and early May when flocks of 100–200 are occasionally seen. Normally, flocks contain 25–60 birds. Most unusual was the presence of as many as 2000 in the Grey Cloud Island area, Washington County in late April and early May 1995 (***The Loon*** 67:115–116).

Ring-billed Gull *(Larus delawarensis)*

Fall: Usually over 90% of the gulls observed in the Twin Cities area are Ring-billed Gulls. Exceptions to this are from mid-September to mid-October when thousands of Franklin's Gulls may invade several of the roost locations, and after freeze-up of most local lakes in late November and December when Herring Gulls become the most common species.

I censused six roost sites from late July to early January in 1992 and 1993, and the results show the progressive build-up of migrants into these areas (Fig. 2). Over 4000 individuals were present at these six sites when censuses were initiated in late July in both 1992 and 1993. Although I seldom conducted censuses in mid-summer, incidental observations have shown that only small numbers (less than 500?) of mostly immatures are present from mid-May to mid-July, and the first influx of migrants occurs in late July. For example, in 1995 I noted the first flock of adults and the first juveniles of the fall on 27 July. This influx coincides with the breeding cycle of Ring-billed Gulls in the Great Lakes, where colony disbandment is said to take place in late July and early August (Southern 1974, ***The Loon*** 52:14).

These same six roosts were censused at the peak of migration in late September and early October from 1990–94

(Table 2). Although these counts indicate a general increase in numbers, these results cannot be used as an index to changes in population because all roosts within the Twin Cities were not included. For example, the low count in 1994 may be due to many gulls shifting their feeding and roosting location to the Lake George area, which was not included in these counts prior to 1994, and because the landfill at Ramsey, Anoka County closed after the peak of migration in 1993, causing the Diamond Lake roost count to plummet in 1994.

Censuses of all known active roosts in the Twin Cities area (Table 1) at the peak of migration in 1993 and 1994 yielded an estimate of 45,200 Ring-billed Gulls from 23–30 September 1993, and 44,700 from 4–13 October 1994. Although some gulls may have arrived in the area during the census period, and others may have shifted roosts, causing some overlap between counts, this error is believed to be minimal compared to the total number. Censuses at each roost tended to build simultaneously, indicating that each roost population remained relatively distinct, and that the influx of migrants was uniform throughout the study area. These total counts are probably very close to the total population for a number of reasons. As indicated, all significant roosts within the Twin Cities were believed to have been found, nearly all gulls in the Twin Cities area apparently gather at these roosts where they can be visibly counted, no regular daily movement to outside roost locations was suspected, and censuses at all the roosts were conducted during as few days as possible.

Spring: Spring migration is much more rapid than fall migration, with thousands of birds moving into the area in just a few days, and over 1000 birds present in the Twin Cities for little over one month, from late March to late April or early May (Fig. 3). This is in contrast to fall migration, when over 1000 birds are present for over four months (from late July to late November or early December). Although early migrants are occasionally reported in February in southern Minnesota (noted in three of past ten years in seasonal reports in ***The Loon***), the first Ring-billed Gulls do not usually arrive in the Twin Cities region until mid-March (Table 3), and the first significant influx (1000 birds) cannot be expected until late March. Numbers quickly peak during the last few days of March and the first half of April, when 15,000 and 25,000 individuals were present in 1995 and 1994, respectively (Fig. 3).

The spring migration also follows a much narrower corridor through the Twin Cities area than fall migration. Thousands of birds move up the Mississippi River Valley onto Spring Lake and Pigs Eye Lake, both important roost locations in spring, since they become ice-free earlier than most other local lakes.

Year	First Ring-billed	First Herring	First thousand gulls
1991	3/11	3/11	3/19
1992	2/29	2/29	3/30
1993	3/26	3/23	4/4
1994	3/13	3/13	3/21
1995	3/12	3/16	3/19
Average	3/12	3/13	3/24

Table 3. Comparison of early dates for Herring and Ring-billed Gulls in Twin Cities area with the first thousand gulls counted (Herring and Ring-billed combined). Steve Carlson and Jeff Dains contributed several early dates. In an effort to exclude occasional overwintering birds and unusually early migrants, records more than a week earlier than subsequent observations are not included.

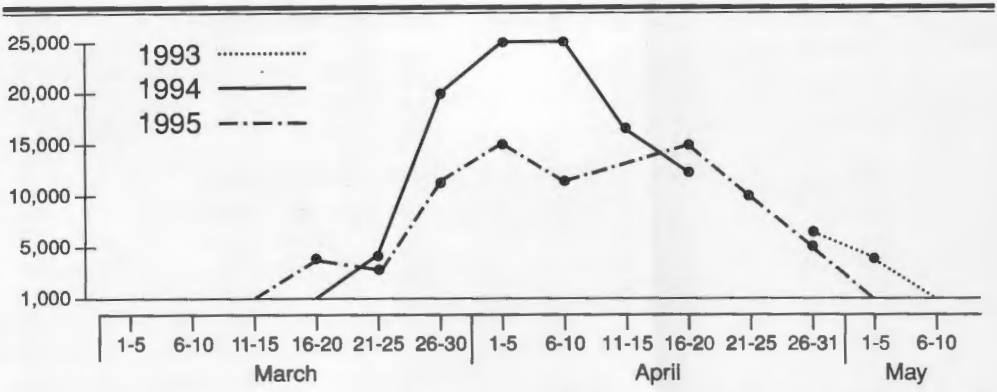

Figure 3. Five-day estimates of total number of Ring-billed Gulls moving through Twin Cities area during spring migration, 1993–1995. Only counts over 1,000 birds are included. Censuses ended on 17 April 1994. Censuses shown for 1993 were only from 30 April–7 May at Lake George. Numbers apply only to corridor described in text.

Birds from these two locations make daily flights west to the Pine Bend and Burnsville landfills, and north to feeding areas near Lake George and Bunker Lake. Black Dog Lake is comparatively poor for gull watching during spring migration, and only modest numbers have been observed on Lakes Calhoun and Harriet. Many of the other local lakes used heavily in fall (such as White Bear Lake and Lake Minnetonka) do not become ice-free in spring until most gulls have moved through the area, and apparently do not attract significant numbers. Regular spring censuses of all roosts throughout the Twin Cities have not been done, however.

Occasionally, spring flocks take advantage of additional roosting areas. For example, from 26–30 March 1994, up to 15,000 Ring-billed Gulls roosted at Lake Vadnais, Ramsey County when it became ice-free unusually early. The entire assemblage departed northward at dawn each day to feed at Bunker Lake and Lake George. By 5 April when other local lakes had opened, the flock had dispersed and thousands of birds were noted roosting at Pleasant Lake, Centerville Lake and White Bear Lake. These observations demonstrate the ephemeral nature of spring migration.

Also in contrast to fall migration, actively migrating birds are frequently seen, especially along the Mississippi River Valley. The largest flight observed consisted of 8000 Ring-billed and a minority of Herring Gulls seen moving up the Mississippi River at its confluence with the St. Croix River at Hastings/Prescott on the mornings of 25–26 March 1991. The relative percentage of birds splitting into the St. Croix and Mississippi River corridors is unknown, but it is suspected that most birds continue along the Mississippi River to Spring Lake and Pigs Eye Lake.

Once most lakes in the Twin Cities become ice-free, the majority of Ring-billed Gulls move to the Lake George area, where large numbers linger through the end of April. For example, over 6000 were present here on 30 April 1993, nearly all of which were adult Ring-billed Gulls. By 3 May only 3000 gulls remained, and on 7 May virtually all were gone (***The Loon*** 65:153–54). In 1995, the 5000 birds present at Lake George on 28 April were entirely gone by 1 May. These northward departures are congruent with arrival dates at breeding colonies in the Great Lakes region, where most potential breeders are said to be present by late

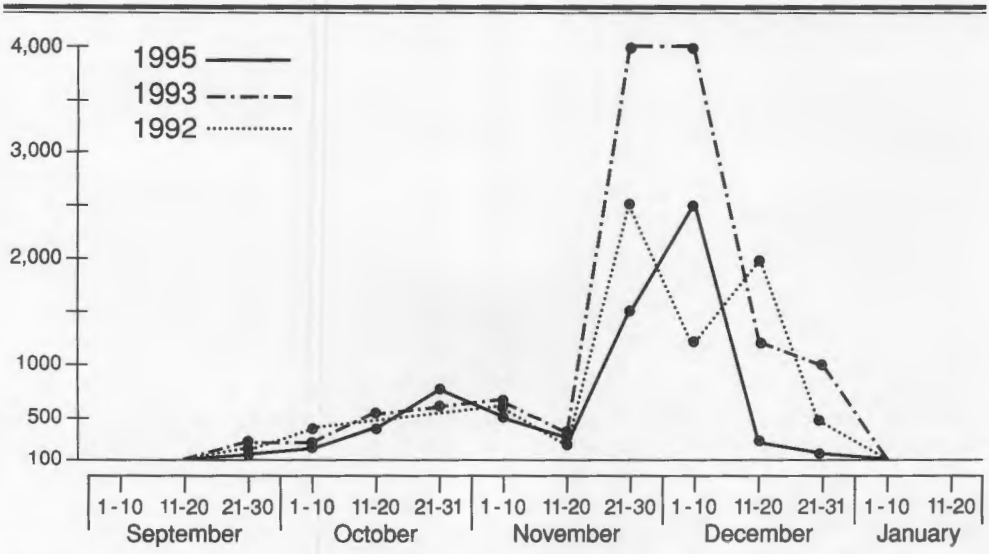

Figure 4. Counts of Herring Gulls roosting at Lakes Calhoun and Harriet and Black Dog Lake in 1992, 1993 and 1995. Only counts over 100 birds are included. After Lakes Calhoun and Harriet froze, counts were taken at Black Dog Lake.

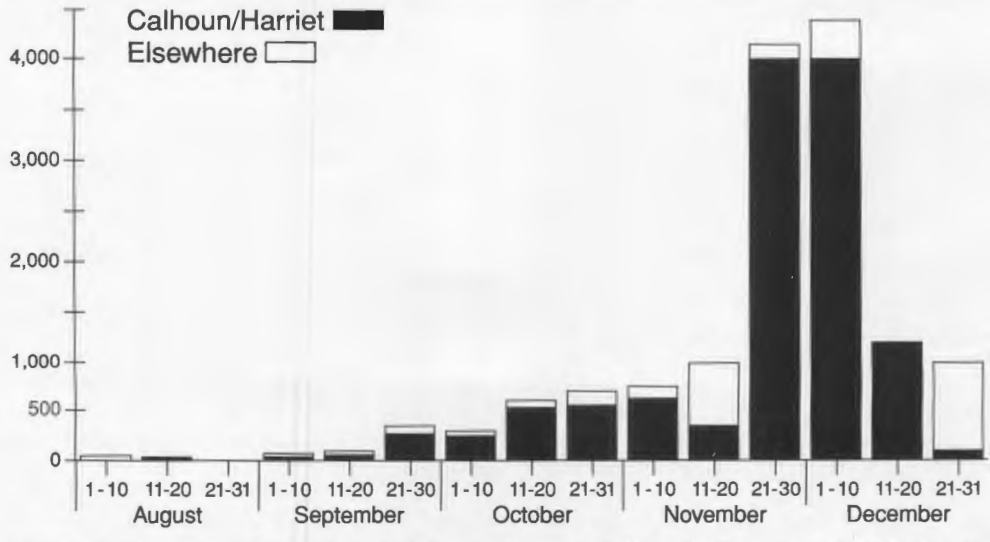

Figure 5. Counts of Herring Gulls roosting at Lakes Calhoun and Harriet in comparison to number found at other locations in Twin Cities, 1993. In mid-November, many Herring Gulls roosted with concentrations of Common Mergansers elsewhere in the Twin Cities. In late December, most Herring Gulls shifted their roost to Black Dog Lake.

Year	Peak Number	Date	Comments
1986	500+	12/4	rough estimate
1987	700+	12/1	still arriving at 1615
1988	2,500–3000+	12/5	still arriving at 1630
1989	2,000+	12/1	rough estimate
1990	2,000	12/5–19	peak count
1991	1,500–2,000	11/9–25	early freeze-up due to Halloween blizzard
1992	2,000	12/11	peak count
1993	4,000	12/4–9	peak count
1994	—	—	no count available
1995	3,000–4,000	12/1–2	peak count at Black Dog Lake

Table 4. Annual estimates of peak number of Herring Gulls roosting at Lakes Calhoun and Harriet in fall migration, 1986–95. Observations from 1986–89 were provided by Steve Carlson, and count in 1995 was provided by Bruce Fall.

April or early May (Southern 1974).

Herring Gull *(Larus argentatus)*

Fall: Although individual Herring Gulls can occasionally be seen in the Twin Cities during summer (two late July records during this study), and a few are present in August (up to seven), numbers do not begin to build until the first half of September, and significant numbers (over 100 individuals) do not arrive in the Twin Cities until the latter half of September (Fig. 3). Peak numbers are not reached until after freeze-up of most local lakes, usually in late November to mid-December, when counts of 2000–4000 have been made at Lakes Calhoun and Harriet and Black Dog Lake (Fig. 4 and Table 4). Lakes Calhoun and Harriet, which often remain open weeks after most other local lakes have frozen, are a focal point for this species; usually over 90% of the Twin Cities population of Herring Gulls roosted at this location (Fig. 5). Most concentrations of this species are directly attributable to daily movement from Lakes Calhoun and Harriet or Black Dog Lake. Away from the influence of these locations (birds believed to not be roosting at Lakes Calhoun and Harriet or Black Dog Lake), counts of Herring Gulls did not exceed 200 individuals at a single location. When Lakes Calhoun and Harriet freeze over, usually in mid-December (average of last seven years was 11 December), many Herring Gulls shift their roost to Black Dog Lake, where a few remain until late December or early January.

In this study, roosting Herring Gulls showed a marked habit of rafting apart from Ring-billed Gulls. At Lake Calhoun in September and October 1992–95, the vast majority of Herring Gulls roosted in a distinct, nearly pure raft near the west shore of the lake, while the much larger raft of Ring-billed Gulls remained out in the center. Herring Gulls clearly preferred to roost on Lake Calhoun during this time, with very few recorded roosting at Lake Harriet until November. Later in November, the distinct raft of Herring Gulls was no longer obvious, and many apparently shifted their roosting locations to other areas, resulting in an unexplained drop in numbers at Lakes Calhoun and Harriet in mid-November (Fig. 4). Although the drop in numbers of Herring Gulls in 1993 was believed to be due to many shifting their feeding and roosting locations to the lakes where Common Mergansers were concentrating (Fig. 5), few mergansers were present in 1995, so this cannot explain the drop in numbers during mid-November 1995. Herring Gulls roosting at Lake Minnetonka also tended to roost near shore away from the main raft of Ring-billed Gulls, but there

was not a distinct raft as at Lake Calhoun, probably because fewer Herring Gulls used Lake Minnetonka as a roost site (maximum count was 168). At other locations in the Twin Cities where only small numbers were present (e.g., Diamond Lake, Pleasant Lake), Herring Gulls tended to roost on the edge of the Ring-billed Gull rafts.

Flocks of up to 200 Herring Gulls have been noted associating with flocks of up to 500–1000 Common Mergansers in November and December on larger lakes throughout the Twin Cities. There is apparently a direct association between Herring Gulls and Common Mergansers; these two species migrate through the Twin Cities area at the same time, and the Herring Gulls utilize the large Common Merganser population as a food source through kelptoparasitism. The gulls wait until the mergansers surface with a fish, then try to steal the fish or force the merganser to drop its catch. This association is especially obvious at Lake Pepin in southeastern Minnesota where hundreds of Herring Gulls occasionally gather with the thousands of Common Mergansers present there in November and December. Interestingly, although large numbers (10,000+) of mergansers have been noted here every year for the last nine years, large numbers (1000+) of Herring Gulls are not present every year.

The Twin Cities appears to be an important stop-over site for migrating Herring Gulls in Minnesota. Only the North Shore of Lake Superior regularly hosts similar concentrations in fall (3000–4500). Although large numbers of Herring Gulls (1000–5000) are reported as occurring along the lower Mississippi River at the time of the fall freeze-up and the spring thaw (Janssen 1987), this appears to be based on only two observations (Bell Museum of Natural History files). These are the only areas of the state where large numbers of Herring Gulls have been reported in migration in Minnesota.

Interestingly, departure of nearly all Herring Gulls from the Twin Cities area consistently occurs in late December and early January, despite the continued existence of open water for roosting at Black Dog Lake and available food at the Burnsville and Pine Bend landfills. During the last five years (1991–95), the departure of Herring Gulls ranged from 25 December to 4 January, and averaged 1 January (based on the last sighting of five or more gulls for each year). Although cold weather appears to stimulate these departures, the conditions encountered in the Twin Cities at this time are less severe than those survived by a large population of gulls (1000 birds in 1994) wintering at Duluth-Superior on the North Shore of Lake Superior (average minimum January temperature in the Twin

10-day Period	Bunker	George	Calhoun	Spring	Prairie Is.	Red Wing	Average %
11–20 March	—	—	—	—	—	10.2 (1)	10.2 (1)
21–31 March	2.5 (3)	4.0 (1)	6.8 (3)	20 (1)	1.3 (2)	6.7 (2)	5.6 (12)
1–10 April	0.4 (2)	3.0 (2)	3.8 (2)	5.9 (2)	1.2 (1)	0.1 (1)	2.5 (10)
11–20 April	3.6 (1)	2.3 (3)	—	7.3 (1)	3.1 (1)	—	3.5 (6)
21–30 April	—	2.5 (1)	—	—	—	—	2.5 (1)
1–10 May	—	0.6 (1)	—	—	—	—	0.6 (1)
Average %	1.8 (6)	2.5 (8)	5.6 (5)	9.8 (4)	1.7 (4)	5.9 (4)	4.1 (32)

Table 5. Percentages of Herring Gulls within flocks of over 500 Ring-billed Gulls during spring migration in the Twin Cities, 1993–1995, and at Prairie Island and Red Wing, Goodhue County, 1995. Counts at the Pine Bend Landfill were included in the Spring Lake count, and counts at the Burnsville Landfill were included in the Lake Calhoun count. Sample sizes indicated in parentheses.

Cities is 2.8°F, compared to -2.2°F at Duluth, based on 30 years of data at the National Weather Service). Although this suggests that cold weather is not the only reason gulls depart the Twin Cities, Herring Gulls probably tolerate colder temperatures on the North Shore of Lake Superior because of a strong tendency for adults (three years old or older) to overwinter near the breeding colonies within the Great Lakes basin (Moore 1976). Although Root (1988) claimed that Herring Gulls do not overwinter in areas with an average minimum January temperature less than 10°F, this was based on Christmas Bird Count data, which does not necessarily represent overwintering individuals, because Herring Gulls are still migrating at this time. Perhaps another explanation for the consistent departure of Herring Gulls from the Twin Cities area around 1 January is a simple migratory instinct for the population of this species moving through the Twin Cities to continue onward toward wintering areas.

Spring: Herring Gulls remain relatively uncommon compared to Ring-billed Gulls throughout the spring migration, with no peak period of thousands of birds noted as in fall migration. Peak counts have ranged from 200–370 individuals, and the average percentage of Herring Gulls within flocks of over 500 Ring-billed Gulls was 4.1% (Table 5). Although these results show a marked decrease in percent of Herring Gulls as the season progressed, note the small sample size at the beginning and end of the season. Although Herring Gulls are occasionally seen in February (reported in five of last ten years in seasonal reports in ***The Loon***), most first arrivals are in March (Table 3). A few Herring Gulls remain with the Ring-billed Gulls until late April or early May. For example, there were still 150–200 Herring Gulls with up to 10,000 Ring-billed Gulls near Lake

Year	Min.#	Early	Late	Counties recorded
1975–76	1	—	1/2	Dakota
1977–78	1	11/14	—	Dakota
1978–79	1	11/26	—	Dakota
1980–81	2	11/12	1/2	Dakota, Ramsey
1981–82	1	11/14	—	Anoka
1982–83	2	12/5	—	Dakota
1983–84	1	12/9	—	"Twin Cities"
1984–85	2	11/4	12/4	Dakota, Hennepin
1985–86	2	11/9	11/25	Dakota
1986–87	1	11/30	12/5	Hennepin
1987–88	6	12/19	12/28	Dakota
1988–89	4	12/5	12/23	Dakota
1989–90	2	11/28	12/3	Hennepin
1990–91	4	11/23	12/17	Hennepin
1991–92	3	10/20	12/11	Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey
1992–93	7	10/25	1/31	Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Washington
1993–94	10	10/8	12/24	Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Anoka, Washington, Sherburne
1994–95	9	10/5	1/5	Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Anoka
1995–96	8	10/5	1/2	Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Anoka, Isanti

Table 6. Summary of Thayer's Gull records in the Twin Cities area during fall migration (October–January), 1974–95 (records pooled from seasonal reports in *The Loon*, the files of Steve Carlson and Bruce Fall, and the results of this study). Minimum number of individuals calculated by adding minimum number of each age class observed at one location at one time.

George from 19–24 April 1995, but by 1 May these gulls were gone. Herring Gulls begin arriving on North Shore colonies in late February, and by early April most breeding adults have arrived (***The Loon*** 52:6).

Thayer's Gull *(Larus thayeri)*

Fall: As recently as 1986, Thayer's Gull was considered a very rare migrant in the Twin Cities, occurring principally at Black Dog Lake in late fall and early winter (Janssen, 1987). Although Thayer's Gulls have been recorded at Black Dog Lake almost regularly since this species was split from Herring Gull by the American Ornitholigists' Union in 1973, this species was not reported at Lakes Calhoun and Harriet until 1984 and 1986, and it has been regular there only since 1989 (Table 6). Thayer's Gull is now present in small numbers throughout the Twin Cities area from early October to early January, with most reports from Lakes Calhoun and Harriet and Black Dog Lake.

Peak counts of Thayer's Gulls during the last five years have ranged from three to eight individuals. Although it is generally not possible to accurately check every individual gull within large flocks of Herring Gulls, 16 observations (including three counts made by Bruce Fall) of peak counts of Thayer's Gulls (three or more individuals) observed when all or nearly all Herring Gulls present could be efficiently scanned yielded percentages of Thayer's Gulls ranging from 0.3 to 3.0%, and averaging 1.1%. Extrapolating these results to the peak numbers of Herring Gulls present in the Twin Cities (Table 4), suggests that as many as 20–40 Thayer's Gulls could be present at the peak of migration.

Careful identification of each Thayer's Gull seen passing through the Twin Cities during the past three years supports these estimates of total numbers. Although reports of Thayer's Gulls prior to 1991 were almost entirely limited to Lakes Calhoun and Harriet and Black Dog Lake, the increased coverage throughout the Twin Cities as a result of this study led to the documentation of Thayer's Gulls from many additional locations. For example, during 1993 I made 113 observations of Thayer's Gulls in 12 separate locations in six different counties. Although a minimum of eight first-winter and two adult individuals were involved, analysis of the dates and locations of these observations suggest that as many as 10–14 first-winter and six to eight adults were actually seen, for a total of 16–22 different individuals.

Close scrutiny of the Herring Gull raft on Lake Calhoun in October 1994 and 1995 suggested that adults in particular have been previously overlooked. At least five adults and one first-winter individual were seen there on 12 October 1994 (***The Loon*** 67:113–114), and at least five adults were again present from 21–24 October 1995. During 1995, I believe the total number of adults passing through the Twin Cities was much greater, with possibly as many as 15–20 different birds, based mostly on differences in eye color, primary pattern, and overall size and structure. A number of individuals were seen which had pale or even yellow eyes, and others which had dorsal outer primary coloration which was slightly paler than true black. Although these characteristics are often thought of as indicative of Iceland Gull (*Birding* 23:254–269, ***The Loon*** 54:3–4; 55:33; and 64:58–59), they are actually within the normal range of variation for Thayer's Gull (*Birding* 12:198–210). Although these data suggest an earlier peak arrival for adults than first-winter birds, more observations are necessary before the relative migration timing can be determined for these different age classes.

The Twin Cities is the only inland location (away from the North Shore of Lake Superior) where Thayer's Gulls are currently regular in Minnesota, and recent records indicate that this species is more common here than on the North Shore. Thayer's Gulls are accidental in the fall away from the Twin Cities and the North Shore, with only seven records since 1973 (as published in seasonal reports in

Year	Min.#	Early	Late	Counties recorded
1992	1	3/24	—	Dakota
1993	3	4/12	5/4	Dakota, Anoka, Washington
1994	4	3/22	4/9	Dakota, Anoka
1995	11	3/31	4/25	Hennepin, Dakota, Anoka

Table 7. Thayer's Gull observations during spring migration in the Twin Cities area, as a result of this study.

Year	Early Date	Late Date	Min.#	Locations by county
1941–42	11/21	11/29	1	Ramsey
1960–61	12/4	12/7	1	Dakota/Hennepin (Minnesota River)
1963–64	12/14	—	1	Dakota
1966–67	12/11	12/24	1	Dakota
1969–70	—	1/1	1	Dakota
1973–74	12/29	—	1	Dakota
1975–76	—	1/2	1	Dakota
1978–79	11/19	12/21	3	Dakota, Anoka
1980–81	12/20	12/27	7	Dakota, Ramsey
1981–82	12/13	12/20	3	Dakota
1982–83	12/13	—	1	Dakota
1983–84	12/17	—	2	Ramsey

Year	Early Date	Late Date	Min.#	Locations by county	Early Imm	Early Adult
1984–85	11/4	12/10	2	Dakota, Hennepin	11/4	11/22
1985–86	11/24	12/8	3	Dakota	—	—
1986–87	11/29	12/14	3	Dakota, Hennepin	12/4	11/29
1987–88	12/13	12/28	2	Dakota	—	—
1988–89	12/3	12/23	3	Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey	12/3	12/3
1989–80	11/25	12/12	4	Dakota, Hennepin, Anoka	11/25	12/2
1990–91	11/29	12/19	7	Dakota, Hennepin	11/29	11/30
1991–92	11/6	11/28	3	Dakota, Hennepin	11/6	11/7
1992–93	11/25	12/22	3	Dakota, Hennepin	12/2	11/25
1993–94	11/15	1/4	7	Dakota, Hennepin, Anoka, Ramsey	11/20	11/15
1994–95	11/19	1/1	3	Dakota, Hennepin	12/3	11/19
1995–96	11/8	12/22	5	Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey	11/8	12/12
Average	11/22	12/19	3.75		11/22	11/25

Table 8. Summary of Glaucous Gull records from the Twin Cities area during fall migration (November–January), 1941–1983 and 1984–1995 (from seasonal reports in *The Loon*, the files of Steve Carlson and Bruce Fall, and the results of this study). Minimum numbers (Min. #) refer to number of each age class sighted at once. Earliest sightings of immature (first and second winter) and adult individuals are given when known. Averages apply to 1984–95 period only.

Date	Location	Source	Age/Number
4/27–28/37	Hennepin (Lake Minnetonka)	9 (2)	2
3/14/42	Washington (Grey Cloud Island)	14 (1):15	1
4/20/59	Hennepin (Christmas Lake)	species file	2
3/30/74	Dakota (Black Dog Lake)	46:150	1
3/12/78	Dakota (Black Dog Lake)	50:198	1
3/17/81	Dakota (Gun Club Lake)	53:196	1 imm
4/12/92	Hennepin (Long Meadow Lake)	64:209	1 imm
4/21/92	Anoka (Coon Rapids Dam)	64:209	1
3/27–31/94	Dakota (Spring Lake)	this study	1 imm
3/21/95	Dakota (Spring Lake)	this study	1 imm
4/5/95	Anoka (Bunker Lake)	this study	1 imm
4/6/95	Anoka (Bunker Lake)	this study	1 adult
4/13/95	Dakota (Pine Bend landfill)	this study	1 3rd yr

Table 9. Spring records of Glaucous Gulls in the Twin Cities area, as published in *The Flicker* and *The Loon*, from the species file at the Bell Museum of Natural History, and as a result of this study. Age and number are given when known.

Fall records

Date	Location	Reference	Age
11/18–12/9/78	Black Dog Lake, Dakota County	51: 107–8	adult
12/8/86	Lake Calhoun, Hennepin County	59: 55	1st winter
12/5–23/88	Black Dog Lake; and St. Paul, Ramsey County	61: 48–49	adult
11/19/89	Lake Calhoun, Hennepin County	61: 207–8	1st winter
1/9/91	Black Dog Lake, Dakota County	64: 123–24	adult
11/25/91	Black Dog Lake, Dakota County	64: 57–58	adult
12/4/92	Lake City, Goodhue/Wabasha counties	65:97–98	adult
11/10/93	Black Dog Lake, Dakota County	66:44	adult
12/10–14/93	Lake Calhoun; Oak Grove Twp, Anoka county	66:102–3	1st winter
12/18/93	Black Dog Lake, Dakota County	66:127	immature
12/9–18/94	Black Dog Lake, Dakota County	67:46, 148	adult
12/17–26/94	Black Dog Lake, Dakota County	67:46, 148	1st winter
11/26/95	Lake City, Goodhue County	68:57–59	adult
11/29–12/2/95	Black Dog Lake and Pine Bend, Dakota County	68:57–59	1st winter
12/1/95	Black Dog Lake, Dakota County	67:252–253	2nd winter

Spring records

Date	Location	Reference	Age
4/9/94	Oak Grove Twp., Anoka County	66:147–48	adult
3/25–4/2/95	Colville Park, Red Wing, Goodhue County	67:116–17	1st year
3/29/95	Colville Park, Red Wing, Goodhue County	67:184–85	adult
4/7/95	Pine Bend, Dakota County	67:166	1st year

Table 10. All inland (non Lake Superior) records of Iceland Gulls during spring and fall migrations, as published in *The Loon*.

The Loon). Most of these latter records have been from along the Mississippi River in Wabasha and Goodhue Counties in the past six years, and the species is possibly regular there. I observed multiple individuals (up to five) with the thousands of Herring Gulls parasitizing the Common Mergansers on Lake Pepin in both 1992 and 1995, further suggesting regular status here. Interestingly, there are currently no fall or winter reports of Thayer's Gulls in northern Minnesota away from Lake Superior (not even at Mille Lacs Lake!).

Spring: Although Janssen (1987) considered Thayer's Gulls casual to accidental away from Lake Superior during spring migration, I have seen an increasing number during the past four years, and this species is probably a regular migrant in the Twin Cities from late March through late April or early May when the main movement of Ring-billed and Herring Gulls passes through the area (Table 7). In addition to these Twin Cities records, several first-winter and one adult individual were seen near Red Wing, Goodhue County from 19 March–13 April 1995, and this species can probably be expected regularly here as well as gulls that move up the Mississippi River into the Twin Cities area. The increase in sightings during this study probably reflects an increase in familiarity with this species rather than an actual increase in numbers. Because Thayer's Gulls can be so difficult to identify, especially in spring when many worn Herring Gulls can appear similar, documentation for most of these individuals, including all of the birds sighted in 1995, are on file at the Bell Museum of Natural History. Remarkably, there are no published records of this species in the Twin Cities area during spring migration prior to 1991.

Glaucous Gull *(Larus hyperboreus)*

Fall: Following the first fall sighting in the Twin Cities area at Fort Snelling, Ramsey County in 1941, Glaucous Gulls occurred casually at Black Dog Lake in fall migration throughout the 1960s and 70s (Table 8). This species was not recorded at Lakes Calhoun and Harriet, Hennepin County until 1984, and it did not become regular there until 1988 (Table 8). Glaucous Gulls are currently a regular migrant in November and December with the Herring Gull concentrations that fly between Lakes Calhoun and Harriet and Black Dog Lake. As many as seven individuals have been seen at one time. Although immatures arrive first (late October to mid-November) and adults later (late November) on Lake Superior (Janssen 1987), average arrival dates of adults and immatures in the Twin Cities area were similar (Table 8).

Glaucous Gulls only occasionally occur in areas of the Twin Cities away from Lakes Calhoun and Harriet and Black Dog Lake, and most of these records can be directly attributed to daily movement from these latter two locations. These records include the Mississippi River in St. Paul, Ramsey County where gulls from Black Dog Lake are known to feed during the day; the Coon Rapids Dam and fields near Lake George, Anoka County where gulls were documented making daily flights from their roost at Lake Calhoun and Harriet; Medicine Lake and Lake Minnetonka, Hennepin County, which are believed to be alternate roost sites for Herring Gulls; and near the Pine Bend landfill, Dakota County. The records from Centerville Lake, Anoka County and White Bear Lake, Ramsey County are believed to be away from the influence of Lakes Calhoun and Harriet and Black Dog Lake.

The Twin Cities is the only inland area that Glaucous Gulls can be considered regular in Minnesota. This species is casual away from Lake Superior and the Twin Cities in fall, with 12 published records (from seasonal reports in ***The Loon***). Half of these records are from along the Mississippi River in southeastern Minnesota in Goodhue, Wabasha and Winona counties. I have seen this species with the large gathering of Herring Gulls attracted to the thousands of Common Mergansers on Lake Pepin, Goodhue and

Wabasha counties, in three of the past four fall seasons (1992–1995, but I made no observations there in 1994), and it is possibly regular at this location.

Spring: Glaucous Gulls are casual anywhere away from Lake Superior in spring, with only 25 inland records known to date (from seasonal reports in ***The Loon***, the species file at the Bell Museum of Natural History, and the observations in Table 8). All but one of these records are from southern Minnesota. Spring records have occurred in the state from an early date of 12 March to a late date of 28 April. No peak period is discernible, but the average spring date is 5 April. Of these 25 records, 13 of them are from the Twin Cities, and 11 of the Twin Cities records have been in the last ten years (Table 9). In contrast to fall migration, most spring records in the Twin Cities have been at locations away from Lakes Calhoun and Harriet (no records) and Black Dog Lake (only two records).

Iceland Gull *(Larus glaucoides kumlieni)*

In the past ten years, there have been more reports of Iceland Gulls in the Twin Cities (approximately 15 individuals) than on the North Shore (approximately nine individuals). Furthermore, with the exception of one adult present at Black Dog Lake in 1978, all of the Twin Cities records have been in the last ten years (Table 10). Multiple individuals have been recorded at Black Dog Lake during the past three falls, and further records can be expected. Iceland Gull was unknown as an inland spring migrant in Minnesota until 1994, and yet three individuals were recorded during spring 1995. The only inland location where Iceland Gulls have occurred besides the Twin Cities area is along the Mississippi River in Goodhue County, with two fall records from Lake City, Goodhue and Wabasha counties, and two spring records from Red Wing, Goodhue County. This increase in records of Iceland Gulls is concurrent with an increase in records of Thayer's Gulls. Because these two species are so similar and identification is so difficult, with many apparent intergrades reported (Birding 23:254–269), many observers now consider these two gulls to be the same species (Birding 22:197–200). Although many individuals will remain controversal or unidentified (***The Loon*** 55:188–189; and 58:18–20), I encourage observers to continue documenting suspected Iceland Gulls in detail, preferably with photographs.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *(Larus fuscus)*

Most records of this currently casual species in Minnesota have occurred in the Twin Cities area (18 of 24 records). In Table 11, each individual sighted is considered a separate record, but some sightings probably represent reoccurrences of the same individual. The second and third-winter birds seen at Black Dog Lake in 1987 and 1988 respectively, the adult seen in Hennepin and Dakota Counties during the fall seasons from 1992–95, and the third-summer bird reported near Lake George, Oak Grove Twp, Anoka County on 2 May and 11 September 1993 are all believed to be reoccurrences of the same individuals. Therefore, these 18 records probably represent only 13 individuals. In 1995, multiple individuals were seen during both the spring and fall seasons, and this species appears to be well established as a rare but regular migrant in the Twin Cities.

Little Gull *(Larus minutus)*

Two recent spring records of single adults in Hennepin County: 10 May 1995 at Lake Calhoun (***The Loon*** 67:175–76), and 15 May 1994 near Rogers (66:178).

California Gull *(Larus californicus)*

Of the approximately 15 records for this casual species in the state, only four of them are from the Twin Cities. A first-winter individual was identified at Lake Harriet on 5 November 1985, and collected on 16 November 1985 (date in ***The Loon*** 58:16–18 is incorrect). Another first-winter individual was seen at Lakes Calhoun and Harriet on 29–30 October 1987 (***The Loon*** 60:49–50). An adult was

Fall records

Date	Location	Reference	Age
12/20–25/87	Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co.	60:50–52	2nd winter
9/11–14/88	Diamond Lake, Hennepin Co.	61:44–45	adult
11/30–12/9/88	Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co.	61:45	3rd winter
8/9/90	Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co.	62:171	adult
11/21–12/22/92	Hennepin and Dakota counties	64:232	adult
9/11/93	Oak Grove Twp, Anoka County	65:207–8	3rd summer
9/29–12/9/93	Hennepin and Dakota counties	66:46–47	adult
11/16–12/9/94	Hennepin and Dakota counties	67:63–64	adult
10/1–11/14/95	Hennepin and Dakota counties		3rd winter
10/19–12/7/95	Hennepin and Dakota counties		adult
11/3—15/95	Hennepin and Dakota counties		4th winter

Spring records

Date	Location	Reference	Age
4/29/90	Goose Lake, Carver County	62:119	adult
3/31-4/1/92	Grey Cloud Island, Washington County	64:127	1st year
5/2/93	Oak Grove Twp, Anoka County	65:153–54	3rd summer
4/9–14/94	Oak Grove Twp, Anoka County	66:147–48	2nd summer
4/9/95	Oak Grove Twp, Anoka County	67:177–78	3rd summer
4/17–20/95	Oak Grove Twp, Anoka County	67:177–78	adult
4/19–28/95	Oak Grove Twp, Anoka County	67:177–78	3rd summer

Table 11. Lesser Black-backed Gull records in the Twin Cities area during spring and fall migrations, as published in *The Loon*.

seen at Black Dog Lake on 20 August 1989 (***The Loon*** 61:153), and a second-winter individual was seen at Forest Lake, Washington County on 20 October 1993 (***The Loon*** 66:44).

Ivory Gull *(Pagophila eburnea)*

One first-winter individual was seen on the Mississippi River in St. Paul in Dakota, Ramsey and Washington Counties from 15–23 December 1991 (***The Loon*** 64:3–4), and a second individual, also in first-winter plumage, was present at this location on 23 December 1991 (***The Loon*** 64:4–5). These are the only non-Lake Superior records for the state.

Black-legged Kittiwake *(Rissa tridactyla)*

A first-winter individual was seen at Lock and Dam #2 at Hastings, Dakota County on 8 November 1988 (***The Loon*** 60:187), and possibly the same individual was seen again 21 miles to the west at Black Dog Lake on 3–8 December 1988 (***The Loon*** 61:45). Another first-winter individual was seen at Black Dog Lake on 1–2 December 1995 (***The Loon*** 67:248–249).

Great Black-backed Gull *(Larus marinus)*

A first-winter individual was seen at Black Dog Lake on 2–8 December 1988 by many observers (***The Loon*** 61:39). What was more than likely the same individual was seen on Lake Harriet on 5 December 1988, presenting strong evidence supporting daily movement of gulls between Black Dog Lake and Lakes Calhoun and Harriet as early as 1988. A fourth-winter individual overwintered at Black Dog Lake, from 29 November 1991 to 8 March 1992 (***The Loon*** 64:12–15).

This bird was seen feeding on the Mississippi River in St. Paul almost daily from 7 December 1991–1 January 1992, but flew with the other gulls to Black Dog Lake each day to roost (***The Loon*** 64:148). An adult was seen at Pigs Eye Lake on 27 March 1995 (***The Loon*** 67:181–182).

Discussion

Numbers of gulls migrating through the Twin Cities have apparently increased substantially since the mid-1980s. Local observers (Steve Carlson, Robert B. Janssen, Tom Tustison) feel both Ring-billed and Herring Gulls have increased noticeably in the past ten years, but little quantitative data is available. Multiple numbers of Glaucous and Thayer's Gulls have been present only since the 1980s. Both Iceland and Lesser Black-backed Gulls were virtually non-existent ten years ago, but are almost regular now, with multiple individuals seen the past few seasons. Furthermore, all except one of the 44 records of casual or accidental gulls in the Twin Cities have occurred in the last ten years! Whether this dramatic increase in the number and variety of gulls migrating through the Twin Cities is a result of actual population increases or increased observer effort is problematic, however.

Most records of rare gulls and all large counts of Herring Gulls in the Twin Cities have occurred at Lakes Calhoun and Harriet and Black Dog Lake. Since most of the rare, "white-headed" gull species (Iceland, Thayer's, Glaucous, Lesser Black-backed, Great Black-backed, etc.) tend to be recorded most often when large numbers of Herring Gulls are present, this further suggests an increase in Herring Gulls and other associated gull species. The reports of Glaucous Gulls dating back to the 1960s and Thayer's Gulls dating back to the 1970s at Black Dog Lake suggest that observers have been scrutinizing gulls at this area throughout this time, and the virtual lack of records of casual or accidental species at this location prior to 1987 suggests that these species have indeed increased in numbers. Likewise, although Lakes Calhoun and Harriet are two of the most heavily birded lakes in the state, large numbers of Herring Gulls were not noted gathering there in the late afternoon and evening until 1986 (Table 4), and movement of large numbers of gulls from Lakes Calhoun and Harriet to Black Dog Lake was not suspected until 1988 (Steve Carlson, personal communication). More than likely, these movements of Herring Gulls were not obvious until this species became common in the region.

Increased observer effort and knowledge of gull identification have undoubtedly been factors in this apparent increase in gull records. For example, most observers did not focus their attention on Lakes Calhoun and Harriet in the late afternoon when gulls come to roost until they realized that rare species could be seen, and only in the past few years has this become popular. In addition, most observers focus their attention on gulls only in November and December when most rare species can be seen, resulting in such phenomena as the early October migration of Thayer's Gulls remaining unknown until recently (***The Loon*** 67:113–114). Although conspicuous species such as adult type Lesser Black-backed Gulls were probably not overlooked in the past, most observers lacked a thorough knowledge of such species as Thayer's and Iceland Gulls ten years ago.

With the exception of a migrational movement of some 10,000 Ring-billed Gulls over Lake Minnetonka on 3 October 1959 (*The Flicker* 31:134), large concentrations of this species in the Twin Cities were unreported in the past. Janssen (1987) and Green and Janssen (1974) list peak concentrations of Ring-billed Gulls in Minnesota of up to several thousand birds. During this study, peak roost counts numbered 10,000–15,000 individuals, and up to 20,000 have been estimated in the Lake George area. Most large concentrations of Ring-billed Gulls noted during this study centered around several landfills, the fields near Lake George, and a number of roost locations

(where the gulls are generally only visible at dawn and dusk), all of which have not been previously covered by birders. Local farmers in the Lake George area have told me that Ring-billed Gulls have been abundant there only in the last 5–10 years, due at least in part to expansion of their food waste recycling program, and to closing of local landfills (e.g., the Oak Grove landfill). Longley did not note Ring-billed Gulls gathering on Forest Lake, Washington County until 1985 (***The Loon*** 61:41–42), and I did not note roost flights of gulls heading towards White Bear Lake, Ramsey County until 1984. These roost locations likely developed as Ring-billed Gulls became more common as a transient in the area. In the absence of other previous censuses of this species, the only other evidence of an increase in numbers is a general increase in the conspicuousness of Ring-billed Gulls in the Twin Cities area.

The possible increase in numbers of Ring-billed Gulls migrating through the Twin Cities corresponds to the sudden increase in numbers nesting in the St. Louis River estuary at Duluth-Superior: 30 nests in 1973 increased to 8,361 breeding pairs in 1986, and recent counts (1992–93) document over 10,000 pairs of Ring-billed Gulls in the estuary (***The Loon*** 65:163–174). This population explosion has been documented throughout North America, with an average annual increase of 11% from 1976–1984 in the Great Lakes population (Ryder 1993). Approximately 26,524 Ring-billed Gulls nested in Minnesota in 1993 (unpublished data from Minnesota Department of Natural Resources), suggesting the 45,200 individuals censused at the peak of migration in the Twin Cities in 1993 included migrants from additional areas, although it must be noted that many non-breeding individuals also remain within the state during summer.

There has not been a corresponding increase in numbers of Herring Gulls nesting in Minnesota on the North Shore of Lake Superior, with population estimates increasing from 6,186 in 1978 to 7,738 in 1984 (***The Loon*** 52:15–17, and unpublished data from Minnesota Department of Natural Resources). Following a rapid increase since the turn of the century until the 1960s, the North American Herring Gull population stabilized in the mid 1970s and 1980s, and may actually be decreasing in certain areas (Pierotti and Good 1994). The population of Herring Gulls passing through the Twin Cities does not necessarily originate from Lake Superior. Analysis of band recoveries by Hofslund (1959) and Moore (1976) show an increasing trend with age for individual gulls banded in the Great Lakes to remain there during winter, resulting in over 90% of the adult (three years old or older) population remaining resident within the Great Lakes. Birds from Lake Superior and Lake Michigan colonies tended to move south along the shore of Lake Michigan. Although many subadults (juveniles and one year olds) tended to move away from the Great Lakes during winter, with many recorded south along the Mississippi River Valley, young birds make up only a small proportion of the Herring Gulls observed in the Twin Cities (first-and second-winter individuals increased from only 1.4% of all birds on 7 October to 20% on 29 December in 1995). Also, the departure of the large concentration of Herring Gulls that occurs at Grand Marais on the North Shore of Lake Superior in November and early December apparently does not correspond to the peaks noted in the Twin Cities. Therefore, it seems likely that the Herring Gulls observed in the Twin Cities originate from areas outside the Great Lakes.

The large number of Ring-billed Gulls passing through the Twin Cities area relative to the total number nesting in Minnesota, the significant number of Herring Gulls using Twin Cities locations during fall migration, and the impressive number of rare species recorded here all show the importance of the Twin Cities as a migratory stopover for gulls. The large human population and its associated abundant food waste resources, along

with the numerous lakes in the area, apparently provide an ideal location for large numbers of gulls. The relationship between large numbers of gulls and urban growth has been well noted. Conover (1983) correlated three related factors (increased human garbage, increased agricultural practices, and formation of large reservoirs) with a 22-fold increase in Ring-billed Gull populations and a doubling of California Gull populations in the western United States in the last 50 years.

Although communal roosting in gulls in North America has been previously described by Schreiber (1967), and Cooke and Ross (1972), I am unaware of roost counts being used to census gull populations on this continent. Winter gull roost censuses have been done in England and Ireland every ten years, and are used to monitor population trends (Sutcliffe 1992). Here, volunteers are coordinated to count gulls at roost locations throughout the area, preferably on the same weekend. Although most gull observations center around feeding and loafing areas, communal roosts should receive more attention as an efficient means to view large assemblages of many species, to identify rare species, and to estimate population sizes.

Acknowledgments

Steve Carlson, Bruce Fall and Peder Svingen all reviewed the manuscript and made many helpful suggestions. Steve and Bruce also generously donated the use of their own gull records, and Steve was especially helpful in tolerating our endless discussions about gulls, and enlightening me about the gull scene at Lakes Calhoun and Harriet over the years. Sharon Nelson provided Minnesota Department of Natural Recources' records of nesting Ring-billed Gulls.

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Fall 1995 Census of Migrants at the Lakewood Pumping Station

Kim R. Eckert

During the fall of 1995, there was again a systematic count of migrants in Duluth at the Lakewood Treatment Plant, more commonly known as the Lakewood Pumping Station (hereafter, Lakewood). Similar counts of southbound fall migrants funneling down the north shore of Lake Superior and through Duluth had also been conducted in 1983–1985, 1987–1990, and 1994, and these have been summarized in previous issues of the Hawk Ridge Annual Report and in ***The Loon*** (62:99–105, 63:60–61, and 67:47–49).

The coverage in 1995 was similar to that in 1994; i.e., there were enough observers and funding to schedule counts on an every-other-day basis, beginning at official sunrise from 21 August through 20 October. (In 1994, the census was extended to 30 October because of an unusual number of migrants still passing through.) Two changes were implemented in 1995 in an effort to improve the consistency of coverage. First, the coverage on each day lasted two hours, no matter how busy or slow the day's flight was; in 1994, although the average coverage per day was close to two hours, there were 10 dates with either more or less than two hours of counting when the flight was relatively busy or slow. Second, there were two counters scheduled to be present during each hour of coverage (and this was accomplished in all but four hours); in 1994, there was often only one observer present, and sometimes three or more observers participated in the count. It is intended that these two changes will be incorporated in our method of coverage in future years at Lakewood, so that valid comparisons between the years will be easier to make.

In all, there was coverage on 28 dates, with no counts due to rain on 25 August, 30 September, and 6 October. During the 56 hours of coverage, there was a total of 75,050 migrants, for an average of 1,340 migrants per hour. This was a considerable improvement over the 1994 census, when 59,333 migrants were counted over 33 days/65.5 hours, for an average of only 906 migrants per hour. While the totals in 1994 were disappointing and primarily due to predominantly unfavorable weather for migration during much of the fall, the weather and migration in the fall of 1995 seemed closer to average. During 1988–1990, when there was daily coverage at Lakewood from early August through late October, there was an average of about 1,400 migrants per hour of coverage, close to the 1995 average.

In addition to the three rain-out days, when it is assumed there was essentially no migration, there were three dates with totals of less than 100 migrants: 80 on 29 August (warm front; light east winds), 56 on 6 September (low overcast; southeast winds), and 63 on 24 September (drizzle; light south winds). On the other hand, there were six dates with over 5,000 migrants:

- 5,923 / 14 September / cold front; northwest winds
- 9,770 / 18 September / cold front; northwest winds
- 12,261 / 26 September / no front; northwest winds
- 5,062 / 8 October / cold front; winds light and variable

- 13,011 / 12 October / warm front; strong southwest winds
- 6,160 / 14 October / cold front; strong northwest winds

As expected, cold fronts or northwest winds are generally conducive to the movement of fall migrants, but note there was no cold front on the day with the second highest total, and there was even a warm front on the day with the highest count.

Following are some peak flight days for some selected species and species groups; note that these numbers were recorded over a two-hour period:

21 August — 1,220 Red-winged Blackbirds; 34 Eastern Kingbirds; 175 Evening Grosbeaks
8 September — 1,131 Blue Jays
12 September — 1,056 Cedar Waxwings; 916 Blue Jays
14 September — 3,415 Blue Jays; 73 American Kestrels
16 September — 2,519 warbler, sp.
18 September — 7,674 warbler, sp; 323 American Goldfinches
22 September — 311 Lapland Longspurs; 16 American Pipits
26 September — 9,700 warbler, sp.
28 September — 239 Common Grackles
8 October — 4,058 American Robins; 466 American Crows
12 October — 11,620 American Robins; 136 Sharp-shinned Hawks
14 October — 3,010 American Robins; 1,355 blackbird, sp; 215 Dark-eyed Juncoes

Among the other species of note seen during the coverage at Lakewood last fall were:

An early Snow Goose on 18 September;
A flock of five White-winged Scoters on 16 October (water birds make up only a small part of the totals each year at Lakewood);
Good numbers and a good variety of shorebirds during the season, including an unexpected Long-billed Dowitcher on 26 September;
An adult light-morph jaeger briefly seen on 6 September, which was quite possibly a Long-tailed;
A late Chimney Swift on 16 October;
An unusually heavy movement of Hairy Woodpeckers (10 on 16 October), Gray Jays (11 on 12 October and 12 on 18 October), Black-capped and Boreal Chickadees during the season (these species are not detected as migrants most years);
An apparently migrating White-breasted Nuthatch on 12 September (this species is not normally thought of as a migrant);
An unusually heavy (and perhaps unprecedented) migration of Swainson's Thrushes during September, including 15 on the 4th (nocturnal migrants such as thrushes are seldom noted during coverage hours);
An early Bohemian Waxwing on 2 October;
Migrant European Starlings on four dates, including a flock of eight on 18 October;
A flock of seven early Snow Buntings on 22 September;
An apparently migrating House Finch on 10 October;
Unusually low numbers of both Common Nighthawks and Pine Siskins (curiously, these two species were also noted as down in numbers at Lakewood in 1994).

The primary counters during the season were Laura Erickson and the author, who each provided 28 hours of coverage. We also acknowledge the counting assistance provided especially by Tim Dawson (16 hours), Karen Keenan (14.5 hours), and Ken Huntley (13 hours); Barb Akre, Dave Alexander, and Jeff Pentel also assisted in the coverage. Funding for the 1995 census at Lakewood was provided by Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve.

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Virginia Rail, 4 June 1995, Irish Creek, Cook County. Photo by Peder Svingen.

The Summer Season
(1 June to 31 July 1995)

Terry Wiens

Fairly warm but otherwise normal summer weather resulted in 265 species being reported, an average number, but with very few rarities. Highlights included Clark's Grebe, Laughing Gull, Sprague's Pipit, White-eyed Vireo, and Yellow-throated Warbler.

The pattern of cool weather in late spring continued into early June. Light frosts were recorded in northern Minnesota in the second week of the month; this period was also very wet, possibly creating problems for nesting birds. An abrupt change in weather occurred in mid-June, as unusually hot weather moved in to dominate the remainder of the month. During the third week of June, temperatures hit 100° in several localities. Statewide, temperatures for the month averaged anywhere from one to five degrees above normal; rainfall was somewhat below average.

July weather was much more "typical", with overall temperatures averaging slightly below normal throughout the state, and rainfall slightly above normal.

An extreme heat wave did hit the state in mid-July, with temperatures breaking 100° in many southern locations (an incredible 111° was recorded on July 13th in Winona Co.!). High winds and thunderstorms ravaged north-central Minnesota in mid-July, resulting in extensive damage to eagle and Osprey nests, as well as forests (more than a dozen counties were declared disaster areas).

A total of 265 species was observed for the season, very near to the previous ten-year average of 266. Seasonal reports and/or breeding information was submitted by no fewer than 120 observers. Contributors sent in 1,242 nest or brood cards, a new record high. Breeding data was collected for 159 species, slightly above the average number for the past ten years. Special thanks go to the members of the Hiawatha Valley Audubon Nesting Project for contributing 166 nest/brood cards, and to the Minnesota County Biological Survey staff for contributing 31 cards (and additional observations) from several northwestern counties surveyed in 1995. Other top contributors of breeding information included Jean Segerstrom/Mark Newstrom (207 nest/brood cards), Russell Hofstead (163), Karl Bardon (125), Michael North (67), and Jack Sprenger (56). Thanks to all contributors for your outstanding efforts!

No single sighting stood out in 1995; relatively few casual and no accidental species were reported. A single Clark's Grebe was observed at Agassiz N.W.R.; there have been nine summer records for this species since it was "split" from Western Grebe in 1985. A Laughing Gull made a brief appearance in northwestern Minnesota in mid-June. A singing Sprague's Pipit, first discovered in the spring season, was relocated in Polk Co. at the beginning of June (this species may be one of the rarest breeders in the state; over the past 15 years, no more than one or two encounters have been reported in any given year). Another, potentially very rare breeder in the state, White-eyed Vireo, was discovered singing in early June in extreme southeastern Minnesota. And finally, a male Yellow-throated Warbler, first discovered in 1994, returned to Sibley S.P. in Kandiyohi Co. this summer.

Other interesting observations included a pair of Snowy Egrets in the vicinity of Pigs Eye Lake in the Twin Cities for most of July; several Cattle Egret reports from four southern counties; a Northern Bobwhite found in extreme southeastern Minnesota (where their range just barely extends into the state); Red-necked Phalaropes in two western counties; a Boreal Owl heard in Koochiching Co. in early June (despite this species being a regular breeder in northeastern Minnesota, it is not often detected during June and July); several reports, including a rare nesting record, of Three-toed Woodpeckers in three northern counties; a number of Bell's Vireos in five southern counties; a mid-summer Yellow-breasted Chat seen by many people in Cannon River Wilderness Park (this species, although never abundant, has been notably absent for many summers); and Henslow's Sparrows at two locations in prairie remnants of western Minnesota.

Additional late migrants and summer vagrants included a June Snow Goose in southern Minnesota; late migrant Oldsquaw and Surf Scoters on Lake Superior; mid-June records of a Rough-legged Hawk and an adult Ferruginous Hawk; and a record-breaking late migrant American Tree Sparrow lingering into early June in central Minnesota.

For roughly 30 species in 1995, there were more reports than usual, whereas reports were significantly down for only half that number. This was in sharp contrast to the previous year, when reports were down for a large number of species. Some species, such as Turkey Vulture and Wild Turkey, appeared to be continuing an expansion of numbers and/or range. Two re-introduced species, Trumpeter Swan and Peregrine Falcon, have had similar success. Two somewhat cyclic species, Black-billed Cuckoo and Dickcissel, are presently at or approaching high points. Several warbler species, including Cerulean Warbler, were more

widely reported than usual, an encouraging sign. Also heartening was the increase in reports for Purple Martin, a species that has declined in recent years. A few other species for which there were significantly more observations included Green-winged Teal, Sandhill Crane, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Swainson's Thrush.

Species for which the number of reports declined included several waterbirds such as Eared Grebe, Western Grebe, Green Heron, Ruddy Duck, and American Coot. And, while pheasant numbers increased significantly, Gray Partridge continued to be scarce. Other species exhibiting marked drops in reports included Downy Woodpecker and Indigo Bunting.

Only two species regularly seen in the summer were not reported in 1995. Most disturbing was the absence of any Yellow-crowned Night-Heron records; this species had been observed in all of the previous 15 summers. With the exception of Hudsonian Godwit, all other species that have been reported in seven or more of the past ten summers were observed this year.

The format for the species accounts is the same as the past several years. 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. **3230 Strand Rd., Duluth, MN 55803.**

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
Nested in 12 counties (including *Douglas* SWa) as far south as Kandiyohi, Carver, Anoka; probable nesting in four counties. Seen in 15 other counties as far south as Scott County.

Pied-billed Grebe
Nested in *Lac Qui Parle* JB/TS, *Winona*

HVA, Polk, Hennepin; probable nesting in five counties. Observed in 24 additional counties statewide.

Horned Grebe
Only reports from Marshall, Otter Tail. Growing concern about the breeding status of this species has prompted the Minnesota DNR to propose changing its status to threatened.

Red-necked Grebe
Nested in Marshall, Mahnomen, Clearwater, St. Louis, Big Stone; probable nesting in seven counties. Seen in eight additional counties as far south as Nicollet, Rice.

Eared Grebe
Unusually scarce; fewest reports since 1986. Nested in Marshall; also observed in Polk, Lac Qui Parle.

Western Grebe
Very few reports; less than half the number of counties reported from last year. Nested in Marshall, Big Stone, Jackson; probable nesting in Hennepin. Also observed in Polk, Clearwater, Otter Tail, Traverse, Todd, Faribault.

CLARK'S GREBE
Reported for fifth consecutive summer. Single bird observed on 7/15 at Agassiz NWR in Marshall Co. (PB *et al.*; ***The Loon*** 67:187).

American White Pelican
Observed in 41 counties throughout the state. This species is now regularly reported statewide in summer, despite limited breeding.

Double-crested Cormorant
Nested in St. Louis, Ramsey; probable nesting in Beltrami, Cook. Seen in 29 additional counties in all regions.

American Bittern
Observed in 18 northern counties plus Anoka.

American Bittern, 15 July 1995, Marshall County. Photo by David Cahlander.

Least Bittern
Seen in Polk, Mahnomen, Clearwater, Cass, Anoka, Hennepin.

Great Blue Heron
Fewer reports than usual. Nested in Otter Tail, Douglas, Crow Wing, Aitkin, Carver, Ramsey; probable nesting in Beltrami, Becker. Observed in 40 other counties statewide.

Great Egret
Nested in Ramsey; seen in 25 additional counties as far north as Clay, Becker, and Aitkin counties.

Snowy Egret
Two birds discovered at Pigs Eye L. in Ramsey Co. on 7/9 (TT, mob.) and remaining into September; same birds

(presumably) seen on 7/11 at nearby location in Washington Co.

Cattle Egret
Groups of five or fewer birds observed in Meeker, Nicollet, Blue Earth; plus 22–23 birds seen on 6/6 in Nobles ND, JP.

Green Heron
Fewest reports in 12+ years; several observers noted scarcity. Seen in 30 counties as far north as Polk, Koochiching, St. Louis, Cook.

Black-crowned Night-Heron
Relatively few reports. Nested in Marshall, Ramsey; seen in nine additional southern counties plus Otter Tail, Roseau PS.

[TRUMPETER SWAN]
Most reports since re-introduction began. Nested in *Carver* DBM, *Hennepin* DBM,CS; probable breeding in Polk, St. Louis. As many as eight birds observed in Norman, Becker, Jackson. Status of this species in Minnesota is currently being evaluated.

Waterfowl

Snow Goose
Single blue morph bird reported on 6/18 near Rice Lake S.P. in Steele Co. DA.

Canada Goose
Nested in 12 counties including *Pennington* SKS, *Nicollet* LF; probable nesting in six. Seen in 36 additional counties.

Wood Duck
Nested in 13 counties, probable nesting in 11; observed in 24 other counties throughout state.

Green-winged Teal
Most reports in 15+ years. Observed in 22 counties in all regions of state except the southwest.

American Black Duck
Nested in *Koochiching* SKS, St. Louis; also seen in Polk, Clearwater and Cook counties

Mallard
Nested in 17 counties, probable nesting in eight; observed in 34 other counties.

Northern Pintail
Few reports, similar to last year. Observed in Marshall, Lake of the Woods, Polk, Mahnomen, Clay, Big Stone.

Blue-winged Teal
Nested in Polk, Mahnomen, Becker, Anoka, Winona; probable nesting in Todd. Seen in 31 additional counties throughout state.

Northern Shoveler
Nested in *Polk* ABo. Observed in seven other western counties plus Clearwater, McLeod, Wright, Sherburne, Hennepin, Anoka.

Gadwall
Reported in Roseau, Marshall, Koochiching, Clay, Big Stone, Murray, Hennepin; plus 6/4 Winona CS.

American Wigeon
Probable nesting in Cass. Observed in Roseau, Marshall, Polk, Clearwater, Beltrami, Koochiching, Aitkin, St. Louis; plus 6/24,7/8 Hennepin SC and 7/16 Wabasha CS.

Canvasback
Nested in Polk, Clay; probable nesting in Becker. Also observed in Roseau, Marshall, Mahnomen, Big Stone, Lac Qui Parle, Hennepin, Dakota.

Redhead
Seen in ten western counties plus Stearns, Anoka, Blue Earth, Rice, Faribault, Dodge.

Ring-necked Duck
Nested in Polk, Clearwater, Anoka; probable breeding in Becker, Beltrami, Aitkin. Observed in 17 additional counties as far south as Lac Qui Parle, McLeod, Rice.

Lesser Scaup
Many reports; seen in 15 counties in all regions except southwest.

Oldsquaw
Third summer report since 1980. Six late migrants observed on **6/3** at Paradise beach in Cook Co. PS.

Surf Scoter
Two reports of late migrants: four birds observed on **6/3** at Paradise beach in Cook Co. PS, and two birds seen on **6/4** at Duluth in St. Louis Co. RRS.

Common Goldeneye
Nested in Itasca, St. Louis; probable nesting in Koochiching, Cass. Also observed in Roseau, Mahnomen, Beltrami, Hubbard, Lake, Cook.

Bufflehead
Only report: 6/12 Polk MCBS.

Hooded Merganser
Nested in ten counties including *Becker*; probable breeding in five. Seen in seven other northern counties plus Hennepin, Ramsey.

Common Merganser
Many reports. Probable nesting in St. Louis, Cass; also observed in Beltrami, Itasca, Lake, Cook, Crow Wing, Mille Lacs.

Red-breasted Merganser
Only reports from St. Louis and Lake counties.

Ruddy Duck
Fewest reports since 1988. Nested in Big Stone; observed in nine additional western counties plus McLeod, Hennepin, 6/2–7/18 Winona CS.

Vultures to Falcons

Turkey Vulture
Most reports ever; seen in 40 counties statewide.

Osprey
Nested in Cass, Crow Wing, Aitkin, Anoka, Winona; probable nesting in St. Louis, Todd. Observed in 18 additional counties as far south as Otter Tail in the west and Carver, Dakota in the east.

Bald Eagle
Nested in seven counties including *Wright* DO; probable nesting in seven. Observed in 12 additional counties as far south as Lac Qui Parle in the west and Houston in the east.

Northern Harrier
Reported from 33 counties in all regions of the state.

Sharp-shinned Hawk
Observed in Becker, Beltrami, Itasca, Crow Wing, Aitkin, St. Louis, Carlton.

Cooper's Hawk
More reports than usual. Nested in Anoka, Hennepin, Ramsey, *Winona* HVA; probable breeding in Douglas, Goodhue. Seen in 19 other counties in all regions except northeast and southwest.

Northern Goshawk
Probable nesting in St. Louis; also observed in Clearwater, Koochiching, Itasca.

Red-shouldered Hawk
Many reports, similar to 1992. Nested in Hennepin; probable nesting in Mahnomen, Goodhue. Observed in 13 additional counties roughly along a line from Beltrami to Wabasha; no reports from the northeast, southwest, or south central regions.

Broad-winged Hawk
Nested in Anoka, Winona; probable breeding in Crow Wing, Lake. Seen in 17 other counties as far southwest as a line through Polk, Otter Tail, Rice; plus late migrants 6/1 Rock, 6/5 Lac Qui Parle.

Swainson's Hawk
Reported in ten western counties plus Washington, Dakota, Rice, Winona, Mower.

Red-tailed Hawk
Nested in seven counties including *Otter Tail* SDM; probable nesting in seven others. Seen in 33 additional counties statewide.

Ferruginous Hawk
Fourth summer record in past five years. Single adult observed on 6/17 near Blue Mounds S.P. in Rock Co. AH.

Rough-legged Hawk
Single bird seen on 6/12 along the Clearwater/Polk Co. line SKS; this species has now been recorded for five consecutive summers.

American Kestrel
Nested in St. Louis; probable nesting in Morrison, Washington, Watonwan, and Winona. Observed in 45 additional counties throughout state.

Merlin
Nested in St. Louis; also seen in Koochiching, Itasca, Lake, Cook. Early migrant(?) 7/18 Douglas RHl.

Peregrine Falcon
Report from Midwest Peregrine Falcon Restoration Project (P. Redig, H. Tordoff) indicates increased breeding in state. Nested in *Itasca*, *Wright* DO, *Dakota*, *Winona*, Lake, Cook, Sherburne, Hennepin, Ramsey, Washington, Olmsted; plus observations in Becker, Otter Tail, McLeod.

Partridges to Cranes

Gray Partridge
Very few reports, similar to last year. Nested in Lyon; observed in six other western counties plus Watonwan, Carver, Dakota, Rice, Goodhue.

Ring-necked Pheasant
Statewide population up 32% from last year (Minnesota DNR). Nested in *Douglas* SWa, Anoka, Carver, Dodge; probable nesting in Rice. Seen in 27 additional counties as far north as a line through Mahnomen, Todd, and Chisago counties.

Spruce Grouse
Nested in Lake; also seen in Koochiching, St. Louis.

Ruffed Grouse
Nested in Hubbard, Itasca, Crow Wing, Aitkin, Anoka, Winona; probable nesting in Becker, St. Louis, Washington. Seen in 13 additional counties as far southwest as a line through Polk, Otter Tail, Houston.

Greater Prairie-Chicken
More reports than usual. Nested in *Mahnomen* (Downing WPA) MCBS, Wilkin (Western Prairie); probable nesting in Clay (Bicentennial Prairie). Also observed in Polk, Pennington, Norman, Becker.

Sharp-tailed Grouse
Nested in Aitkin; also seen in Polk, Beltrami.

Wild Turkey
Status of this species has recently been re-evaluated. Wild populations are now considered to be established in the southern half of the state; there are also wild birds in North Dakota that range to the Red River Valley in Clay Co. Nested in *Anoka* PKL; probable nesting in Fillmore. Also observed in Carver, Washington, Dakota, Rice, Goodhue, Winona, Houston; plus Crow Wing (wild?).

Northern Bobwhite
Only report: observed SE of Spring Grove in Houston Co. DJo.

Yellow Rail
Many reports, in part due to MCBS work in northwest. No fewer than **40** occurrences at 14 sites in Polk Co. (MCBS, PS); at least three birds at Waubun Marsh in both Mahnomen and Becker Co. (MCBS, CF); recorded at Sandhill R. and at Neal WMA in Norman Co. MCBS; at least two birds discovered near Swamp L. in Cass PS; plus reports from Roseau Co. PS and the traditional McGregor marsh site in Aitkin Co.

Virginia Rail
Seen in 12 counties primarily in northwest, east central, and southeast; plus a bird calling on territory on 6/3–4 in Cook PS (only second Cook record).

Sora
Reported in 26 counties in all regions except southwest and southeast.

Common Moorhen
Reported from Nicollet, Winona, Houston.

American Coot
Very few reports for second consecutive year. Nested in seven counties including *Becker* MN, *Pipestone* SKS; seen in 12 additional counties in all regions except northeast, central, and southeast.

Sandhill Crane
Over twice the usual number of reports. Nested near Mound Prairie in ***Houston*** RO (first nesting record in southeast); also nested in Anoka. Probable nesting in **Freeborn** ABa, and Todd counties. Seen in 12 northwest and north central counties plus St. Louis, Kanabec, Stearns, Benton, Sherburne, Washington, Rice.

Shorebirds

Black-bellied Plover
Only reports: 6/15 Anoka, and 7/29 Polk County.

American Golden-Plover
Only report **7/22** from Jackson County.

Semipalmated Plover
Late migrant 6/3 Cook. Fall migrants observed in six other counties; early migrant **7/2** Ramsey, peak 7/22 Jackson (40+) KB.

Piping Plover
Observed at traditional breeding site in Lake of the Woods Co.; plus early migrant 7/22 McLeod DBM.

Killdeer
Nested in eight counties; probable nesting in Rice. Seen in 38 additional counties statewide, including a peak of 221 on 7/28 at sod farm in Anoka County KB.

Sandhill Cranes, 15 July 1995, Marshall County. Photo by David Cahlander.

American Avocet
Only reports: 7/13 Polk (2) PKL, 7/15 Wabasha (2) CS.

Greater Yellowlegs
July migrants observed in ten counties; early migrants 7/8 Roseau and St. Louis.

Lesser Yellowlegs
Late migrant 6/1 Anoka. Fall migrants reported in 21 additional counties; early migrant **6/24** Becker MN.

Solitary Sandpiper
Fall migrants observed in 14 counties; early migrant 6/28 Sherburne.

Willet
Only report: **7/22** Jackson (1) KB.

Spotted Sandpiper
Probable nesting in Winona; seen in 24 additional counties statewide.

Upland Sandpiper
Nested in Murray; probable nesting in Douglas. Observed in 12 other western counties plus Anoka, Ramsey, Dakota, Olmsted, Winona.

Marbled Godwit
Reported in eight northwest counties plus Otter Tail, Big Stone.

Ruddy Turnstone
Only records: late migrant 6/13 Cass, early migrant **7/22** Jackson.

Sanderling
Only reports: 6/15 Lake of the Woods, 7/18 Polk, 7/22 Jackson.

Semipalmated Sandpiper
Observed in 11 counties; late migrant 6/11 Pennington, early migrant **7/2** Ramsey.

Least Sandpiper
Late migrant 6/1 Anoka. July migrants seen in 14 additional counties; early migrants 7/1 Anoka, Clay, and Cook.

White-rumped Sandpiper
Only reports: 6/1 Anoka, and 7/22–23 McLeod.

Baird's Sandpiper
Late migrants **6/15** Lake of the Woods (12) PB. Fall migrants observed in six other counties including early migrant **7/1** Anoka PKL.

Pectoral Sandpiper
Fall migrants seen in 13 counties; early migrant **6/28** Rock ND.

Dunlin
Only reports: 6/1 Anoka, 6/3 Dakota.

Stilt Sandpiper
Fall migrants observed in seven counties; early migrant **7/3** Sherburne.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper
Fall migrants seen on 7/29 in Dakota (**52** at Ferris Sod Farms, *fide* AH), Lake, and McLeod; plus Anoka (no date).

Short-billed Dowitcher
July migrants observed in six counties; early migrant **7/1** Anoka. Dowitcher spp.

Upland Sandpiper, 1 July 1995, Clay County. Photo by David Cahlander.

observed on 7/2 in Ramsey Co. (possible Long-billed).

Common Snipe
Nested in Polk. Observed in 21 additional counties as far south as a line through Lac Qui Parle, Washington; plus 6/1 Blue Earth.

American Woodcock
Nested in *Winona* HVA, Anoka; probable nesting in Koochiching. Seen in 12 other counties as far south as Brown and Rice counties.

Wilson's Phalarope
Reported in Roseau, Polk, Norman, Clay, Otter Tail; plus 7/3 Anoka KB, 7/22 Jackson KB, McLeod (no date) PB.

Red-necked Phalarope
First summer reports in three years; 6/3 Clearwater, 7/22 Clay.

Gulls to Terns

LAUGHING GULL
Single bird in first-summer plumage observed on 6/15 at Cameron L. in Polk Co. (RJ, MCBS; ***The Loon*** 67:173–175). This represents the fifth summer record for the state; however, note that all records of this species are currently being re-evaluated.

Franklin's Gull
No breeding reported (there is growing concern about the limited number, and vulnerability, of breeding colonies in Minnesota). Seen in 18 counties as far east as a line through Lake of the Woods, Todd, Le Sueur; 1000+ counted on 7/22 at a landfill in McLeod Co.

Bonaparte's Gull
Most reports in 10+ years. Observed in nine northern counties plus Carver; peak numbers 7/24 Mille Lacs (50+), 7/30 Beltrami (40+).

Ring-billed Gull
Seen in 40 counties in all regions except southeast.

Herring Gull
Nested in St. Louis; seen in eight additional northern counties plus Lac Qui Parle, Washington, Jackson.

Caspian Tern
Relatively few reports. Early June migrants seen in Polk, Beltrami, Becker, St. Louis, Carver, Hennepin, Ramsey; plus **7/8** Dakota TT.

Common Tern
Nested in Lake of the Woods. Observed in Cass (510 adults), Crow Wing, St. Louis, Lake; plus late migrant 6/1 Hennepin. A sick bird (which subsequently died) was found on 7/12 near Garvin in Lyon Co. (JSc); incredibly, this bird was banded as a nestling on 7/28/94 in Cleveland, England!

Forster's Tern
Nested in Marshall, Clearwater, Hennepin; probable nesting in Kittson, Rock. Seen in 22 additional counties in all regions except northeast and southeast.

Black Tern
Nested in Marshall, St. Louis, Anoka, Hennepin; probable nesting in Mahnomen, Rice, Watonwan. Observed in 35 other counties statewide.

Doves to Kingfishers

Rock Dove
Nested in *Dakota* RHf; seen in 43 additional counties throughout state.

Mourning Dove
Nested in six counties; probable nesting in Aitkin. Observed in 47 other counties statewide.

Black-billed Cuckoo
Reports up from 1993 low; many observers noted increased numbers. Seen in 34 counties throughout state.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Most reports since 1990. Observed in 18 southern counties plus Polk, Clearwater, Aitkin.

Eastern Screech-Owl
Nested in *Dakota* RJ (***The Loon*** 67:182); probable nesting in Murray. Also seen in Lac Qui Parle, Hennepin.

Great Horned Owl
Nested in five counties including *Mille Lacs* JS/MN, *Dakota* RHf; probable nesting in Lac Qui Parle. Observed in 21 additional counties statewide.

Barred Owl
Nested in *Blue Earth* (Mankato Free Press), Brown, Aitkin; probable nesting in Kandiyohi, Washington, Nicollet. Seen in 12 additional counties in all regions except southwest.

Great Gray Owl
Only reports from St. Louis (Sax-Zim bog area), Aitkin.

Long-eared Owl
Only record: nested in Aitkin (***The Loon*** 67:161–163).

Short-eared Owl
Observed at McGregor marsh in Aitkin Co. and near Grimstad in Roseau Co.

Boreal Owl
First summer report in four years. Bird heard calling on 6/11 two miles east of Ray in **Koochiching** Co. PS.

Northern Saw-whet Owl
Only reports from Koochiching and St. Louis.

Common Nighthawk
Nested in Aitkin; seen in 28 additional counties statewide.

Whip-poor-will
Most reports in more than fifteen years. Nested in Marshall; recorded in 15 other counties in all regions of the state except west central and southwest.

Chimney Swift
Nested in *Watonwan* DBr, and probable nesting in Todd County; seen in 41 additional counties statewide.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Probable nesting in Crow Wing and Winona; observed in 32 other counties in all regions except the south-west.

Belted Kingfisher
Probable nesting in Fillmore; seen in 38 additional counties statewide.

Woodpeckers to Flycatchers

Red-headed Woodpecker
Nested in Nobles; probable nesting in Anoka, Dakota, Pipestone. Observed in 33 other counties in all regions except northeast.

Red-bellied Woodpecker
Nested in *Scott* DBM, Winona; probable nesting in Otter Tail, Anoka, Rice. Seen in 14 additional southern counties plus Todd, Aitkin.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Nested in St. Louis and Winona counties; probable nesting in five counties. Seen in 23 other counties in all regions except southwest.

Downy Woodpecker
Fewest reports in 11+ years. Nested in Anoka, Dakota, Brown; probable nesting in Crow Wing, Hennepin, Ramsey, Winona. Observed in 31 additional counties statewide.

Hairy Woodpecker
Nested in eight counties including *Marshall* SKS, *Winona* HVA; probable nesting in four. Seen in 27 other counties throughout state.

Three-toed Woodpecker
Most reports in several years. Nested for third consecutive year (in same nest tree!) along High Lake Rd. in St. Louis, SS; one male observed on 6/9 along Twomley-Williams Rd. in Koochiching, AH; pair seen on 6/3 along Lima Mountain Rd. in Cook PS; and one female found on 6/20 near S. Brule R. in Cook.

Black-backed Woodpecker
Nested in Lake; probable nesting in Cook, Hubbard. Also observed in Roseau, Koochiching, St. Louis.

Northern Flicker
Slight decline in number of reports in recent years. Nested in Cass; probable nesting in St. Louis, Crow Wing, Anoka. Seen in 42 additional counties statewide.

Pileated Woodpecker
Nested in *Marshall* BO, St. Louis, Anoka; probable nesting in Todd, Crow Wing. Observed in 30 other counties in all regions, including Lyon in southwest.

Olive-sided Flycatcher
Seen in eight northern counties within normal range; plus late migrants 6/1 Hennepin, 6/4 Wilkin, and 6/11 Brown.

Eastern Wood-Pewee
Nested in Winona; probable nesting in Becker, Anoka. Observed in 42 additional counties statewide.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
Seen in seven north central and northeast counties plus Pine; late migrants 6/1 Brown, 6/2 Hennepin, 6/6 Ramsey.

Acadian Flycatcher
Probable nesting in Winona. Three birds on territories at Murphy-Hanrahan Park in Scott and Dakota Co.; plus three birds on territories at Nerstrand Big Woods in Rice Co. Also observed in Hennepin, Nicollet, Goodhue.

Alder Flycatcher
More reports than usual. Nested in St. Louis. Seen in 18 other northern counties plus Stearns, Anoka, Hennepin, Washington; mid-summer records **6/24,27** Rice. Spring migrants recorded in six southern counties; late migrants 6/12 Olmsted, **6/14** Scott.

Willow Flycatcher
Probable nesting in Anoka, Rice. Seen in 20 additional counties as far north as Polk, Red Lake in the west and Meeker, Washington in the east.

Least Flycatcher
Nested in Marshall, Anoka; seen in 39 other counties statewide.

Eastern Phoebe
Nested in ten counties including *Douglas* SWa; probable nesting in seven. Observed in 21 additional counties throughout state.

Great Crested Flycatcher
Nested in *Crow Wing* JS/MN; probable nesting in Dakota. Seen in 43 other counties statewide.

Western Kingbird
Nested in Hennepin; probable nesting in Washington. Seen in 15 western counties plus Lake of the Woods, Todd, Sherburne, Anoka, Renville, McLeod.

Eastern Kingbird
Nested in five counties including *Houston* DBM; probable nesting in five. Observed in 42 additional counties throughout state.

Larks to Ravens

Horned Lark
Relatively few reports, similar to last year. Nested in Anoka, Winona; probable nesting in Todd. Seen in 27 other counties in all regions except northeast and only Aitkin in north central.

Purple Martin
Reports up, compared to last year's sharp drop. Nested in six counties including *Winona* HVA; probable nesting in Wadena. Seen in 33 additional counties statewide.

Tree Swallow
Nested in eight counties including *Isanti* DMP; probable breeding in eight. Observed in 33 other counties statewide.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Nested in Dakota; probable nesting in

seven counties. Seen in 25 additional counties throughout state.

Bank Swallow
Nested in Ramsey, Dakota, and Olmsted counties; probable nesting in seven counties. Observed in 20 other counties statewide.

Cliff Swallow
Nested in four counties, probable nesting in ten; seen in 33 additional counties.

Barn Swallow
Nested in 12 counties including *Nicollet* LF; probable nesting in five. Observed in 35 other counties throughout state.

Gray Jay
Probable nesting in St. Louis, Lake; also seen in Koochiching, Aitkin, Cook.

Blue Jay
Nested in four counties including *Mower* RRK; probable nesting in six. Seen in 40 additional counties statewide.

Black-billed Magpie
Nested in Aitkin. Seen in six northwest counties plus Beltrami, Koochiching, St. Louis.

American Crow
Nested in *Crow Wing* JS/MN, *Dakota* RHf, Winona; probable nesting in Itasca, Hennepin, Washington. Recorded in 45 additional counties statewide.

Common Raven
Nested in St. Louis, probable nesting in Anoka; seen in 13 additional northern counties.

Chickadees to Gnatcatchers

Black-capped Chickadee
Nested in seven counties, probable nesting in four; observed in 36 other counties statewide.

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

Tufted Titmouse
Probable nesting in Fillmore; also seen in Winona, Houston.

Red-breasted Nuthatch
Most reports in 12+ years and almost double the number for last year. Probable nesting in St. Louis; seen in 16 additional northern counties plus Anoka, Hennepin, Ramsey.

White-breasted Nuthatch
Nested in *Winona* HVA, Crow Wing; probable nesting in Anoka, Washington. Observed in 34 other counties statewide.

Brown Creeper
Nested in Brown, probable nesting in Ramsey; also seen in Mahnomen, Koochiching, St. Louis, Lake, Cook.

House Wren
Nested in seven counties, probable nesting in six; seen in 35 additional counties statewide.

Winter Wren
Recorded in 11 northern counties plus Anoka; also observed at two locations throughout period in **Winona** CS.

Sedge Wren
Most reports in five years. Probable nesting in Rice; seen in 43 additional counties statewide.

Marsh Wren
Observed in 29 counties in all regions except southwest.

Golden-crowned Kinglet
Recorded in Koochiching, St. Louis, Lake, Cook; plus 6/17 Pine (near Duquette) DW.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Seen in Marshall, Lake of the Woods, Beltrami, Koochiching, St. Louis, Lake, Cook.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Nested in Anoka; probable nesting in

Brown, Carver, Hennepin, Ramsey, Winona. Seen in 14 additional counties as far west as Kandiyohi, Otter Tail and as far north as **Mahnomen** mob., Cass, Crow Wing, Aitkin.

Bluebirds to Thrashers

Eastern Bluebird
Nested in ten counties, probable nesting in six; observed in 32 other counties statewide.

Veery
Nested in *Winona* HVA, Anoka; probable nesting in Becker, Crow Wing. Seen in 31 additional counties in all regions except southwest.

Gray-cheeked Thrush
Late migrant 6/1 Pipestone JP.

Swainson's Thrush
Twice the usual number of reports. Seen in Beltrami, Koochiching, St. Louis, Lake, Cook; plus 7/2 Cass. Late migrants 6/1 Becker and Hennepin, 6/2 Rice; early migrant (?) **7/19** Morrison TEB.

Hermit Thrush
Nested in St. Louis, Aitkin. Observed in eight north central and northeast counties plus Roseau, Mahnomen, Becker; also 6/9 Dakota (singing at Murphy-Hanrahan Park) BF.

Wood Thrush
Many reports, similar to 1992. Nested in Anoka; seen in 26 additional counties as far north as Clearwater, Koochiching, Cook and as far west as Mahnomen, Douglas, Jackson.

American Robin
Nested in 19 counties including *Douglas* SWa, *Watonwan* DBr; probable nesting in Becker, Anoka. Seen in 33 other counties statewide.

Gray Catbird
Nested in seven counties, probable nesting in seven; seen in 35 additional counties throughout state.

Northern Mockingbird
Two reports: single bird on 6/4 at Bass Ponds in Hennepin Co. OJ, and single bird on 6/4 near County Fairgrounds in Scott Co. *fide* AH.

Brown Thrasher
Probable breeding in Anoka, Hennepin, Winona; observed in 41 other counties statewide.

Pipits to Vireos

SPRAGUE'S PIPIT
Singing bird observed on 6/1 near Tympanuchus WMA in Polk County MCBS (same individual reported in spring).

Cedar Waxwing
Nested in Aitkin, Anoka, Brown, Rice; probable nesting in Polk, Crow Wing, Winona. Seen in 38 additional counties statewide.

Loggerhead Shrike
Many reports, due to intensive survey work. Nested in *Big Stone* ME, *Lincoln* ME, *Meeker* ME, *Goodhue* ME, *Dodge* ME, *Fillmore* ME, Clay, Lac Qui Parle, Sherburne, Scott, Dakota, Le Sueur; probable nesting in Douglas, Washington, Blue Earth. Also reported 6/11 Aitkin *fide* AH.

European Starling
Nested in Ramsey, Dakota; probable nesting in St. Louis, Anoka, Nicollet. Seen in 37 additional counties statewide.

WHITE-EYED VIREO
Fifth summer report since 1983. Singing bird discovered on 6/5 at Whitewater WMA in Winona Co. RO (***The Loon*** 67:175).

Bell's Vireo
Several reports: 6/2 Winona (Mud L.) CS; 6/4 – 7/2 Dakota (Black Dog fen) TT *et al.*; 6/16 Blue Earth (near Mankato) MF; 6/17 Wabasha (McCarthy L. WMA) *fide* AH; 6/24 – 7/3 Carver (Minnesota Valley NWR) RG *et al.*

Solitary Vireo
Seen in seven north central and northeast counties plus Roseau; late migrant **6/15** Nicollet MF. Male singing through 6/9 and again on **7/15** in Anoka KB.

Yellow-throated Vireo
Nested in Winona. Observed in 30 other counties in all regions except southwest; including 6/7 **Cook** KMH (***The Loon*** 67:179–180).

Warbling Vireo
Probable nesting in Crow Wing; seen in 37 additional counties in all regions, including St. Louis in northeast.

Philadelphia Vireo
Reported in Koochiching, Cook; late migrants **6/3** Dakota (2). Singing bird observed on 6/23 at Agassiz NWR in Marshall Co. SKS.

Red-eyed Vireo
Nested in *Rice* ABo, Koochiching, St. Louis, Anoka; probable nesting in Becker, Crow Wing, Winona. Seen in 37 additional counties statewide.

Warblers

Blue-winged Warbler
Nested in Scott; probable breeding in Ramsey, Winona. Also observed in Anoka, Hennepin, Washington, Dakota, Brown, Rice, Goodhue, Houston; plus 6/4–18 Otter Tail RJ *et al.*

Golden-winged Warbler
Probable nesting in Crow Wing, Aitkin. Seen in 11 additional northern counties as far west as Mahnomen, Otter Tail; plus Sherburne, Anoka, Washington.

Tennessee Warbler
Most reports in more than fifteen years years. Nested in *St. Louis* KB (spruce bog near Echo L.; first positive breeding record since 1970 for state). Also observed in Roseau, Beltrami, Koochiching, Lake, Cook; plus 6/11 Becker, **7/15** Clay CF. Migrants observed in six southern counties; late migrants 6/3 Nicollet and Anoka, early migrant **7/18** Hennepin. Unusual mid-summer report: **7/1** Rock ND.

Nashville Warbler
Nested in St. Louis; probable nesting in Anoka. Seen in 16 additional northern counties plus Hennepin, Washington; late migrant **6/6** Brown JSp.

Northern Parula
Seen in seven north central and northeast counties plus Mahnomen, Becker.

Yellow Warbler
Nested in eight counties including *Clay* CF; probable nesting in Becker, Rice. Seen in 35 additional counties throughout state.

Chestnut-sided Warbler
Nested in *Rice* SK (Cannon R. Wilderness Park; most southerly nesting record for the state), *Anoka* KB; probable nesting in Crow Wing. Observed in 16 other northern counties plus Isanti, Sherburne, Hennepin, Dakota.

Magnolia Warbler
Probable breeding in Lake; also seen in Koochiching, St. Louis, Cook, Carlton. Late migrant **6/12** Anoka KB.

Cape May Warbler
More reports than usual. Nested in *St. Louis* KB, PB; also seen in Beltrami, Koochiching, Lake, Cook, Crow Wing, Aitkin.

Black-throated Blue Warbler
Only reports from Lake, Cook.

Yellow-rumped Warbler
Probable nesting in Marshall, St. Louis, Aitkin. Seen in 11 other north central and northeast counties plus Roseau, Anoka.

Black-throated Green Warbler
Observed in 11 northern counties as far west as Roseau, Mahnomen, Becker; plus late migrants 6/2 Anoka, **6/26** Hennepin PJa.

Blackburnian Warbler
Most reports in 15+ years. Probable nesting in Becker, St. Louis. Seen in eight north central and northeast counties plus Roseau, Mahnomen; late migrant 6/1 Hennepin.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER
Male on territory at Sibley S.P. in Kandiyohi Co. for second consecutive year; observed from spring season (***The Loon*** 67:226) into August.

Pine Warbler
Nested in Crow Wing; probable nesting in Becker, Cass. Seen in ten additional northern counties as far west as Roseau, Mahnomen, Otter Tail and as far east as Lake; plus Anoka, Ramsey, Washington.

Palm Warbler
Double the usual number of reports. Seen in Lake of the Woods, Beltrami, Koochiching, St. Louis, Lake; plus late migrants(?) 6/17 Pine (near Duquette) DW, **6/24** Crow Wing KR.

Bay-breasted Warbler
Only report: late migrant 6/1 Anoka.

Cerulean Warbler
Most reports in 15+ years (over double the usual number); range appears to be expanding toward northwest. Probable nesting in Houston; eight territorial males found at Murphy-Hanrahan Park in Scott and Dakota County. Also observed in Winona, Goodhue, Rice, Nicollet, Brown, Ramsey, Anoka, Kandiyohi, Stearns; plus 6/4–5 Otter Tail, 6/5–8 **Becker** (RG, BB), 6/12–18 **Clay** (Red R. Woods, near Moorhead; RO).

Black-and-white Warbler
Probable nesting in Crow Wing. Seen in 14 additional northern counties plus Anoka, Hennepin, Washington; also late migrant(?) 6/10 Scott.

American Redstart
Nested in four counties, probable nesting in four; seen in 31 additional counties.

Prothonotary Warbler
Probable breeding in Ramsey, Winona, Houston; also seen in Nicollet, Hennepin, Washington.

Ovenbird
Nested in *Mahnomen* MCBS; probable nesting in five counties. Observed in 28 other counties in all regions except southwest (and only Otter Tail in west central).

Northern Waterthrush
Nested in *St Louis* KB; probable nesting in Anoka. Also reported in Koochiching, Lake, Cook, Aitkin, Carlton; plus 6/22 Mahnomen MCBS.

Louisiana Waterthrush
Nested in Houston (Beaver Creek Valley S.P.; ***The Loon*** 67:201–204), probable nesting in Winona; also observed in Washington.

Kentucky Warbler
Found for fourth consecutive year at Seven Mile Creek County Park in Nicollet Co. mob.

Connecticut Warbler
Observed in Beltrami, Koochiching, St. Louis, Lake, Aitkin, Pine; plus late migrant **6/11** Washington TT.

Mourning Warbler
More reports than usual. Probable nesting in St. Louis, Cass; seen in 13 additional northern counties plus Anoka, Hennepin, Ramsey. Territorial males again present at Murphy-Hanrahan Park in Scott and Dakota Co. BF; plus late migrants 6/2 Rice, 6/3 Brown and Nicollet.

Common Yellowthroat
Nested in St. Louis, Winona; probable nesting in five counties. Seen in 43 other counties throughout state.

Hooded Warbler
Three males on territories in Murphy-Hanrahan Park in Scott and Dakota Co. Bf, mob; also seen in Washington.

Tennessee Warbler nest, 22 June 1995, Echo Lake, St. Louis County. Photo by Karl Bardon.

Northern Waterthrush nest, 24 June 1995, Echo Lake, St. Louis County. Photo by Karl Bardon.

Wilson's Warbler
Singing males observed in Koochiching, St. Louis, Lake; plus late migrant **6/14** Clay MN.

Canada Warbler
Many reports. Seen in seven north central and northeast counties plus late migrants 6/1 Pipestone, 6/4 Dakota, 6/6 Ramsey.

Yellow-breasted Chat
First summer report since 1988. Single bird discovered on 6/25 at Cannon River Wilderness Park in Rice Co. *fide* TB, PB; reported through 7/2.

Tanagers to Longspurs

Scarlet Tanager
Probable nesting in Crow Wing. Seen in 33 additional counties in all regions except southwest (and only Otter Tail in west central).

Northern Cardinal
Nested in four counties, probable nesting in four; seen in 12 other southern counties plus Mahnomen, Becker, Otter Tail, Douglas, Todd, Aitkin.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Nested in five counties including *Douglas* SWa; probable nesting in six. Observed in 35 additional counties statewide.

Blue Grosbeak
Reported in Pipestone, Rock, Nobles.

Indigo Bunting
Fewest reports since 1985. Nested in Anoka; probable breeding in Cass, Hennepin, Rice. Seen in 38 additional counties statewide.

Dickcissel
Most reports since 1990. Nested in *Sherburne* KB; seen in 41 other counties as far north as Polk in the west and Aitkin in the east.

Eastern Towhee
Probable nesting in Winona. Seen in 11 counties roughly along a line from Beltrami to Houston; plus observations along the Minnesota R. valley in Big Stone, Brown, Nicollet. Also reported at **Ely** in St. Louis Co. SW/MS.

American Tree Sparrow
First summer record for the state. Single late migrant observed on **6/3** at L. Hubert in Crow Wing Co. KR; latest date in previous years was 5/29.

Chipping Sparrow
Nested in four counties including *Carlton* KB; probable nesting in seven. Seen in 42 additional counties statewide.

Clay-colored Sparrow
Nested in seven counties including *Lac Qui Parle* RJ, *Grant* SWa, SDM; probable nesting in four. Observed in 25 other counties in all regions except the southeast.

Field Sparrow
Nested in Anoka, Brown; probable nesting in Clay. Seen in 19 additional southern counties plus Traverse, Otter Tail, Douglas; also observed on 7/24 at Agassiz Dunes SNA in Polk Co. MCBS.

Vesper Sparrow
Nested in *Todd* JSK, Anoka, Brown. Seen in 39 additional counties in all regions, including St. Louis in northeast.

Lark Sparrow
Nested in Polk, Anoka; also seen in Roseau, Marshall, Becker, Otter Tail, Sherburne, Isanti, Carver, Ramsey, Washington.

Lark Bunting
Single report: male on 6/12 at Felton Prairie in Clay Co.

Savannah Sparrow
Nested in *Rice* JL, Polk, Clay, Becker; seen in 37 other counties statewide.

Grasshopper Sparrow
Nested in *Sherburne* KB; observed in 25 additional counties as far north as a line

through Marshall, Stearns, Anoka.

Henslow's Sparrow
Single bird singing 6/25 at Blazing Star Prairie in Clay Co. CF; single bird also observed on 6/9 at Kettledrummer Prairie in Wilkin Co. SDM (***The Loon*** 67:186).

Le Conte's Sparrow
Nested in *Becker* MN; seen in 12 additional northwest and north central counties plus Wilkin, Otter Tail.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow
Reported in Roseau (numbers up, PS); found at seven locations in Polk Co. MCBS; found at Neal WMA in Norman RJ; observed at two sites in Waubun Prairie in Mahnomen MCBS; discovered near Swamp R. in Cass, PS; and observed at traditional McGregor site in Aitkin.

Song Sparrow
Relatively few reports, similar to previous year. Nested in four counties, probable nesting in three; seen in 43 additional counties statewide.

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

Swamp Sparrow
Nested in *Crow Wing* JS/MN, St. Louis; probable nesting in Rice. Seen in 29 other counties statewide.

White-throated Sparrow
Nested in St. Louis; probable nesting in Mahnomen, Crow Wing. Seen in 14 additional counties as far south as a line through Becker, Pine.

Dark-eyed Junco
Observed in Koochiching, St. Louis, Lake.

Chestnut-collared Longspur
Probable nesting at traditional Felton Prairie site in Clay Co.; plus eight singing males present through June within Chester Township in **Polk** County MCBS, RJ.

Blackbirds

Bobolink
Probable nesting in Rice; seen in 42 additional counties throughout state.

Red-winged Blackbird
Nested in seven counties including *Mahnomen* MCBS; probable nesting in six. Observed in 44 other counties statewide.

Eastern Meadowlark
Probable nesting in Dakota, Winona; seen in 20 additional counties as far west as a line through Beltrami, Crow Wing, Watonwan.

Western Meadowlark
Fewer reports than usual, similar to previous year. Observed in 38 counties in all regions except northeast.

Yellow-headed Blackbird
Nested in *Becker* MN, Jackson; probable nesting in Todd, Anoka, Rice. Seen in 33 additional counties statewide, including 6/20 Cook KE.

Brewer's Blackbird
Nested in St. Louis; seen in 26 other counties as far south as a line through Clay, Meeker, Dakota.

Common Grackle
Nested in five counties, probable nesting in two; observed in 44 additional counties statewide.

Brown-headed Cowbird
Breeding confirmed in Anoka, Ramsey, and Dakota counties; probable breeding in six additional counties. Seen in 39 other counties throughout the state. Parasitized species included Eastern Wood-Pewee, Red-eyed Vireo, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, American Redstart, Northern Waterthrush, Common Yellowthroat, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Chipping Sparrow, Song Sparrow, and Red-winged Blackbird.

Orchard Oriole
Nested in Hennepin, Dakota. Seen in 20 additional counties as far north as Roseau in the west and Sherburne in the east.

Baltimore Oriole
Nested in four counties, probable nesting in seven; observed in 36 other counties statewide.

Finches to Weaver Finches

Purple Finch
Nested in Anoka; probable nesting in Becker, Crow Wing, St. Louis. Seen in 14 other northern counties.

House Finch
Nested in nine counties including *Dakota* RHf, *Washington* WL, *Pennington* SKS, *Roseau* KB, PS; probable breeding in Becker, St. Louis, and Nicollet counties. Recorded in 31 additional counties statewide.

Red Crossbill
All records: 6/24 and 7/9 St. Louis; 6/25 Lake; 6/29 Mahnomen.

White-winged Crossbill
Several reports: 6/9 – 7/15 Koochiching, 7/8 Roseau, 7/10 Aitkin, Cook (late July).

Pine Siskin
Probable nesting in Becker; seen in 15 additional northern counties.

American Goldfinch
Nested in Anoka, Ramsey, Brown; probable breeding in six counties. Observed in 43 other counties throughout state.

Evening Grosbeak
Seen in nine north central and northeast counties plus Becker, Pine. Fall migrants observed along north shore of L. Superior on 7/24.

House Sparrow
Nested in Dakota, Brown; probable nesting in seven counties. Recorded in 37 additional counties statewide.

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LF	Lawrence Filter
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Proceedings of the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee

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

There was a meeting of the Committee on 3 December 1995, and the agenda included votes on several records. These records included: three potential first state records (which require a unanimous vote for acceptance by all 10 members at a meeting); five records with inconclusive first-round vote totals (which require a second-round vote at a meeting); a record of an individual of uncertain origin (which requires a vote by all 10 members at a meeting); and a record documented primarily by photographs (which are difficult to circulate by mail).

The following records were found to be Acceptable:

Calliope Hummingbird, early November–5 December 1994, Minneapolis, Hennepin County (***The Loon*** 67:3–8).

White Ibis, 13 May 1995, Winona, Winona County (***The Loon*** 67:71–72).

Glaucous-winged Gull, 19 October-24 December 1995, Burnsville, Dakota County and Minneapolis, Hennepin County (***The Loon*** 68:3–13).

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, 7 September 1995, Roseau River W.M.A., Roseau County (***The Loon*** 67:247–

248); a vote on origin was also taken, and the record was accepted as Accidental (i.e. wild vs. captive origin probabilities about equal).

Green-tailed Towhee, 18 December 1994, near Ely, St. Louis County.

Northern Wheatear, 27 September–2 October 1995, Duluth, St. Louis County (***The Loon*** 67:189–191).

The following records were found to be Unacceptable:

Wilson's Plover, 8 June 1995, near Grand Marais, Cook County. Although the description is consistent with this species, the documentation left too many doubts for the Committee to accept such an unusual species. The bird was observed while consulting a field guide, and this seemed to influence its description since no field notes on the bird were apparently written. The identification relied on the bird's larger overall size and bill size than a Semipalmated Plover (but nothing was apparently present for direct comparison), on an all-black bill (which the Semipalmated can also have away from the breeding grounds), and on "gray-pink" legs (but the light conditions at the time were not described and might have been unfavorable).

Prairie Warbler, 26 August 1994, Montessippi County Park, Wright County. The description perfectly fits a male of this species in breeding plumage, but it is unlikely an adult male in late August would be as boldly marked on the face as described. The identification was apparently influenced by consulting field guides during and after the observation, and the description was only written from memory eight months later.

Lesser Black-backed Gull, 1 January 1995, St. Paul, Ramsey County. This "black-backed" gull was most likely a Lesser Black-backed, but the leg color was not seen, the overall size ("about the size of a Herring Gull") would also fit a female Great Black-backed, and the observer's impression of mantle color is difficult to judge since the light conditions and distance involved are not clearly described.

Also discussed at the 3 December meeting were the following items:

It was agreed that only six of the Western Tanager records from the May 1995 influx (***The Loon*** 67:180–181) could be filed as Acceptable, since these were the only ones documented. It was agreed, however, that the other 13 undocumented males reported were still probably correct identifications, and written descriptions or photographs of these individuals would still be welcome. The six Acceptable records are: 9–11 May 1995, near Oronoco, Olmsted County; 14 May 1995, Mankato, Blue Earth County; 11–12 May 1995, near Long Prairie, Todd County; 24 May 1995, near Princeton, Mille Lacs County; 19–21 May 1995, Ironton, Crow Wing County; 10–12 May 1995, near Maple Lake, Wright County.

The status of the Trumpeter Swan was discussed, but for the time being it was decided not to change its status to Regular, and it remains on the Accidental list (the only Acceptable modern record of a "countable" individual is from 1991 in Wabasha County; see ***The Loon*** 63:147–150). Even though introduced Trumpeter Swans are regularly seen in Minnesota, there is no evidence the species has established a viable population since the Committee has yet to receive complete data on their numbers, release dates and locations, movements, and on releases in other states and provinces. It is possible that no decision on changing this species' status will be made until the next official Minnesota checklist is published, which is scheduled for 1999.

Bob Janssen, who has chaired this Committee since its inception in 1974, decided to retire as Chairman, and Kim Eckert has succeeded him.

The next Committee meeting is scheduled for 30 June 1996 and, as are all these meetings, it is open to any M.O.U. member interested in observing our proceedings. For the time and place, contact either Kim Eckert or Bob Janssen.

The following records were voted on by mail August–December 1995 and all

were found to be Acceptable (there were no Unacceptable records):

Sprague's Pipit, 31 May–1 June 1995, Kertsonville Twp, Polk County (***The Loon*** 68:67–68).

Clark's Grebe, 15 July 1995, Agassiz N.W.R, Marshall County (***The Loon*** 67: 187).

Sabine's Gull, 6 September 1995, Agassiz N.W.R, Marshall County (***The Loon*** 67:246–247).

Clark's Grebe, 19 August 1995, Timm Lake, Yellow Medicine County (***The Loon*** 67:252).

Sabine's Gull, 16 September 1995, Warroad, Roseau County (***The Loon*** 67: 251).

Pacific Loon, 21 September–7 October 1995, Stoney Point, St. Louis County.

Black-legged Kittiwake, 16 September 1995, Duluth, St. Louis County.

Sabine's Gull, 5–6 October 1995, Duluth, St. Louis County).

Pacific Loon, 10 October 1995, Lake George, Anoka Co. (***The Loon*** 68:74).

Lesser Black-backed Gull, 1–12 October 1995, Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co.

Pacific Loon, 17 October 1995, Winona, Winona County.

Yellow-billed Loon, 11–13 November 1995, Mille Lacs Lake, Crow Wing County. (***The Loon*** 68:59–60).

Great Black-backed Gull, 22 November 1995, Black Dog Lake, Dakota County.

Great Black-backed Gull, 12 November 1995, Duluth, St. Louis County. (***The Loon*** 68:69).

Great Black-backed Gull, 25 November 1995, Grand Marais, Cook County. (***The Loon*** 68:68–69).

Burrowing Owl, 30 April 1995, Troy Twp, Pipestone County.

Iceland Gull, 29 November–2 December 1995, Black Dog Lake and Pine Bend, Dakota County.

Iceland Gull, 26 November 1995, Lake City, Wabasha County.

Barrow's Goldeneye, 29 November 1995, Lilydale, Ramsey County.

8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.

Yellow-billed Loon on Mille Lacs Lake

Kim Eckert

On 11 November 1995, my Minnesota Birding Weekends group found and identified a juvenile Yellow-billed Loon *(Gavia adamsii)* on Mille Lacs Lake in Crow Wing Co. We were birding along the west side of Mille Lacs from U.S. Highway 169 about three miles south of Garrison when a loon was spotted on the lake along the edge of the ice about 75–100 yards from shore. Viewing conditions were perfect with clear skies, the lake surface was calm, and at 11:30 A.M., the sun was at our backs. At first, the assumption was that this was a Common Loon *(G. immer)* in basic or juvenile plumage, but when I examined the bird through a 20X Kowa TSN–4 spotting scope, it was apparent this was indeed a juvenile Yellow-billed Loon. The bird alternately slept, preened, swam, and dove in front of us for about the next half-hour so that all its field marks were carefully noted. A round blackish smudge on the ear coverts on each side of the head was the first indication of this loon's identity; though not present on all Yellow-billed Loons, this mark is diagnostic when it is present. Even more diagnostic was the pattern on the culmen of the bill: only the basal 40% or so of the culmen was dark, from the base to the area of the nostril, with no darkness present on

Yellow-billed Loon, 11 Novermber 1995, Mille Lacs Lake, Crow Wing County. Photo by Dave Cahlander.

about the distal 60% of the culmen. (On a Common Loon, the culmen is entirely dark to the tip of the bill.) Also visible on the bill was the pale but clear yellow color on the distal half of the bill, with this color fading to horn or bone color on the basal half. The culmen was essentially straight its entire length, while the lower edge of the lower mandible turned at an upwards angle at the gonys, and it also appeared that there was a slight swelling or bulge at the gonydeal angle. When swimming, the loon usually held its bill at a slight but noticeably uptilted angle. Also noted was the overall "warmer" or "blond" appearance of the head and neck, with the general plumage paler and browner than on a Common Loon, which normally appears darker, grayer, and "colder." The feathers on the back and folded wings had whitish edges which formed an overall clean-cut pattern of V- or diamond-shaped markings, indicating juvenile plumage. Several observers also commented that the overall size of this loon appeared to be larger than a Common Loon would be (which is true of a Yellow-billed), but there were no other loons present for direct size comparison. The Yellow-billed Loon was seen and photographed later that day and the next by other observers who were notified of the loon's presence, and it was last seen on the morning of 13 November. At that time, Karl Bardon and others watched the loon as it flew a short distance and crash-landed on some smooth ice it apparently mistook for open water. The loon was visibly injured as a result; a nearby Bald Eagle took notice of this and soon killed and began consuming the loon (***The Loon*** 68:61).

This represents the fourth Yellow-billed Loon record in Minnesota: the previous records were on Lake Winnibigoshish, Itasca County, on 16 November 1980 (***The Loon*** 53:62); on Lake Superior at Duluth and at Two Harbors on 26–28 November 1980 (***The Loon*** 53:62–63; some consider this and the Itasca County birds to be the same individual); and again on Lake Superior at Stoney Point and Duluth on 17 October 1987 (***The Loon*** 60:37–38).

8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.

Yellow-billed Loon Killed by Adult Bald Eagle

Karl Bardon

On 13 November 1995, when Jeff Dains and I arrived at Mille Lacs Lake to look for the Yellow-billed Loon previously discovered by Kim Eckert on 11 November, we were disappointed to discover that sheet ice had formed over much of the lake, including St. Albans Bay where the loon had been seen feeding on the previous two days. We noticed large areas of open water to the south where many ducks were present, and so began searching the backroads between St. Albans Bay and Wigwam Bay for places to look for the loon.

At 9:00 A.M., we finally discovered the loon about one mile south of the original location where it had been feeding. The bird was at the edge of the open water about one-half mile off shore. After about only five minutes of observation, the loon took flight in a northerly direction, but it never rose more than a few yards above the water, and after traveling only a few hundred feet, it crashed landed on the ice. The loon immediately began flopping on the ice, using its wings and feet to propel itself in a most ungainly fashion back toward the open water.

Since our attention was focused entirely on the loon, we did not notice whether Bald Eagles had been circling overhead before the loon took flight or not, but in less than a minute after the loon had landed on the ice, an adult Bald Eagle landed on top of it, and another landed nearby on the ice. The loon's struggles consisted only of vigorously flapping its feet, occassionally lifting its wings, and often turning its head upwards to look at the eagle. The eagle maintained its position on top of the loon without apparent effort, only occassionally reaching down with its beak to bite at the loon's head and neck, tearing off a few feathers in the process.

It took about ten minutes for the eagle to kill the loon, which was finally accomplished when the eagle grasped the loon by the neck with one of its talons. Unfortunately, observation ended at this time because we had to return to the Twin Cities, so it is unknown whether the loon was consumed on the ice, or whether the eagles attempted to carry the loon ashore.

Although it was suggested that the loon mistook the ice for water, and therefore crash landed on the ice, I believe the most likely explanation for this behavior is that the loon was attempting to fly back toward its feeding area near shore, but was either too sick or injured to maintain sustained flight. The loon did not appear to be trying to land. The hypothesis that the loon was weak from sickness or injury is further supported by it's failure to struggle significantly when under the grasp of the eagle.

I have seen eagles attempt to take other birds similar in size to a loon (such as a Herring Gull on Lake Minnetonka in 1992) and the ensuing struggle was much more intense than that observed in this case. Observers who watched the loon on 11–12 November stated that it appeared healthy, often preening and diving as it swam back and forth along the edge of the ice, but sick or injured birds will make every attempt they can to appear normal.

Although a sad ending to a remarkable record (especially for the numerous observers who showed up later in the day to look for the bird!), it was fascinating to have seen the drama of life and death taking place out on the ice of Lake Mille Lacs. **1430 – 100th Avenue NW #212, Coon Rapids, MN 55433.**

BIRDING BY HINDSIGHT

A Second Look at Songs (Part one)

Kim R. Eckert

So, you want to improve your birding skills and don't know where to start. Do you spend hundreds of dollars on bird identification books and journals? Would a new pair of binoculars make a difference, and how does one then decide between Bausch & Lomb, Leica, Swarovski, Zeiss and all the rest? And how about a new spotting scope while you're at it — but how to afford one after buying all those books and binoculars?

I have a better idea. Do yourself a favor, save your money and invest some time instead on learning some bird songs and call notes. In my opinion, there is no more valuable aid to finding and identifying birds than learning their vocalizations. Of course, this skill is not something that works all the time for all birds, especially the reticent ones. It's been a long time, for example, since the sound from a female duck, kettling Broad-winged Hawk, Iceland X Thayer's Gull hybrid, Snowy Owl or Mute Swan helped me find or identify it.

Unfortunately, learning songs and calls is hardly an easy or quick process. Not only are songs and call notes difficult to identify in the first place, but they are even harder to remember after the "off" season of August–March when most Minnesota singers are either absent or silent. Come springtime, be prepared to start all over again trying to recognize songs you thought you knew so well last summer.

Whether you choose to listen to pre-recorded tapes, or conscientiously track down the source of any unfamiliar sound you hear, or bird with those who already know their songs and calls (I recommend the latter), now is the time of year to start listening. Of course, there is no reason or space to describe in these pages all the bird sounds the novice listener may encounter in Minnesota, and this article will be more for those who are already familiar with a variety of vocalizations.

What follows is a selection of songs and call notes which are worth a second look — or, rather, a second listen: sounds which might be unfamiliar to experienced birders, those which involve potential identification problems, and those most useful in the finding and identifying process. If you can master these, or at least be aware of the difficulties they involve, the songs of all the other birds might seem less daunting.

This article only includes non-passerines — i.e., birds on the checklist through the woodpeckers. Additional articles on passerine vocalizations are planned for future issues of ***The Loon***.

Western and Clark's Grebes: Now that birders have become more aware of what Clark's Grebes look like (see ***The Loon*** 61:99–108 or *Birding* 25:304–310) and that they can occur in Minnesota, it now seems certain this grebe will actually prove to be a Regular species in the state.

Less certain, however, is how to identify them, since some grebes show intermediate characteristics, including their territorial calls.

Westerns normally give a two-syllabled "cree creek", while the Clark's call is typically a one-syllabled "cre-e-eek". The problem is that some observers have reported hearing one-syllabled calls emanating from flocks of grebes which visually all appeared to be Westerns. It would be a helpful exercise, therefore, for birders to not only look at all apparent Western Grebes they find but to also listen to them. If any Clark's-like calls are heard, start taking notes on the vocalizing bird and, better yet, try to obtain some tape recordings along with photographs.

Non-mute swans: Back in the good old olden days (the 1960s), looking at swans used to be carefree as well as fun: they were all Whistlings. Then in the dreaded 1970s, not only was the name changed to Tundra Swan but we also started to encounter Mute Swans and had to wonder where they came from and how countable they were. In more recent years the same difficulties have arisen involving Trumpeter Swans, and, to make matters more complicated, the identification of Minnesota swans became more challenging. It's not at all a simple matter to tell adult Tundras and Trumpeters apart, and you also have to consider the possibility of Mute Swan when trying to identify an immature.

Swan identification can be simplified enormously if the bird is calling. The Trumpeter's call has been likened to, well, a trumpet, although to my ear it sounds fuller and lower-pitched — actually more like a trombone (perhaps another name change is in order?) or the honking of a Canada Goose. On the other hand, Tundra Swans sound higher-pitched, somewhat like Snow Geese, or really more like Sandhill Cranes because of the trilled, throaty quality of their calls.

Whistler ducks: One of the first duck calls I learned was the two- or three-syllabled whistling of the male American Wigeon, which, after all, is sometimes called a whistler by hunters. But it took a few more years to figure out how I could sometimes hear this same call among a flock of ducks without any wigeons among them. The answer was pretty simple: Mallards, and perhaps other species, also give this same wigeon-like whistle.

Probably a more common source of confusion involves another duck known as a whistler, this time because of the whistling sound of its wings in flight: the Common Goldeneye. Male goldeneyes during courtship in winter and spring have a loud buzzing call that many birders are unaware of. And this call, as mentioned in an earlier article in this identification series (see ***The Loon*** 67: 100), is very similar to, and has been mistaken for, the buzzy "peent" calls of both the Common Nighthawk and American Woodcock.

Buteos and Blue Jays: Most hawks are encountered during migration, when they tend to be distant, silent specks. But within their breeding ranges in Minnesota the buteos are more vocal, and many birders have become familiar with the high-pitched whistle of the Broad-winged Hawk, the Red-shouldered's two-syllabled call, and the downslurred scream of the Red-tailed. Use caution, however, before adding any of these hawks to the day's checklist on the sole basis of hearing their calls. First, make sure there aren't any Blue Jays around, since jays can give a perfect imitation of these three species' calls. (And I would be interested in hearing from readers if they have heard Blue Jays imitate other buteos, such as the Swainson's Hawk.)

Rails: As with other heard-more-often-then-seen birds like nightjars and owls, learning the calls of rails is highly useful, an almost essential skill. While only a Sora or Virginia can be expected in most Minnesota marshes and are easily distinguished from each other, there are potential identification difficulties involving the calls of the Virginia Rail.

First, birders anxious to find the highly sought Yellow Rail by hearing its noctur

nal ticking call should be careful not to be misled by the "kiddick kiddick kiddick" call of the Virginia Rail. Similarly, be careful about assuming that "kiddick" you hear is coming from a Virginia Rail if you are unfamiliar with frog calls, since the Wood Frog sounds quite similar.

Even harder to find than a Yellow Rail in Minnesota would be a King Rail, and the sounds of this rail and the Virginia are easily confused. Be aware that both species give a descending grunting or oinking series; while the King Rail's version of this should sound slower and lower-pitched than the Virginia's, this would probably be evident only if both were calling simultaneously. And most birders are unaware that the Virginia Rail also has a seldom-heard "tic tic treerr" call, which might be mistaken for a similar King Rail call: a louder, lower-pitched and more rattling "kek kek kr-r-r-r".

Shorebirds: An earlier article in this identification series was on shorebirds (***The Loon*** 67:100–103), and it included some tips on using vocalizations to identify some similar species: i.e., American Golden-Plovers and Black-bellieds, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary and Spotted Sandpipers, and the two dowitchers. Also note that earlier in this present article there was mention of how easily the calls of another shorebird, the American Woodcock, can be confused with the buzz of a goldeneye or mistaken for the nasal aerial call of a nighthawk. (And yet another shorebird — Common Snipe — figures into the discussion of owl calls below.)

That earlier article on shorebirds, however, did not include the so-called "peeps", the most difficult shorebird group of all, which will be covered in a future article in this series. One way to tell these confusing birds apart is by their flight calls, with those of the Baird's and Least Sandpipers similar to each other but unlike the calls of White-rumpeds and Westerns, and the Semipalmated's call being something else again. But it might be best to hold off on all this until that future article.

Cuckoos: While the rapid, low-pitched "coo coo coo" of the Black-billed Cuckoo is unlike any Yellow-billed call, many experienced listeners are unaware that Black-billeds also have another call. They (the cuckoo, that is, not the birders) also give a slower "kowp kowp kowp" series, which is also given by the Yellow-billed. Such a vocalization on its own, therefore, is not identifiable. The only sound that can be safely attributed to the Yellow-billed Cuckoo is when these "kowp" notes are preceded by a rapid series of "ka ka ka ka" introductory notes.

Owls: The calls of this group of birds were probably the first ones most birders realized would be the most useful to learn, but at the same time too many misconceptions of owl calls remain among many birders. Following are some comments which will hopefully sort out what you're really hearing out there at night.

1) Juvenile owls of all species, along with the adults attending them, can give a variety of atypical calls, especially in the spring and summer. These tend to be contact notes within a family group after the young have fledged or while the adults are bringing in prey for their young. Most, possibly all, of these sounds are not identifiable as to the species involved. But since these calls are often of a screeching or screaming nature, they are sometimes erroneously attributed to the Barn Owl.

Incidentally, adult Long-eared and Barred Owls, especially the former, also frequently give such atypical screech and screams while on territory. These calls can also be quite unnerving and similarly assumed to be a Barn Owl's — especially when one is out all alone on a dark night.

2) As mentioned earlier, a calling Wood Frog might be mistaken for a Virginia Rail, and there is yet another amphibian's vocalization worth being aware of. The American Toad gives a prolonged trill which is similar enough to the Eastern Screech-Owl's call to potentially result in a misidentification.

Additionally, it is worth noting that the Eastern Screech-Owl's trill is sometimes interrupted part way through, becoming uneven in tempo and in pitch. One such screech-owl call I heard in Minnesota years ago sounded enough like a Western or Whiskered Screech-Owl that it was worth tracking down to be sure of its identity.

3) Birders eager to hear a Great Gray Owl have been misled by the low-pitched hoots of a distant Great Horned or Long-eared Owl. However, unlike the other two owls, the Great Gray's deep hooting descends in pitch as it ends.

4) Even more highly sought than the Great Gray is the Boreal Owl, and its primary territorial call is actually most easily confused with the sounds from a shorebird. The winnowing of a Common Snipe is quite difficult to distinguish from the calls of a distant Boreal Owl, although a winnowing snipe would be in motion overhead while the owl would be stationary in a tree.

Even more similar to the Boreal Owl's call is the territorial call of a Northern Hawk Owl, which has bred in Minnesota on occasion. I have twice heard this call in Manitoba, and it was longer, softer and more uniform in pitch than the Boreal Owl's primary territorial call. However, the male Boreal does sound very much like a hawk owl when it has attracted a female to its nest cavity, at which time its call becomes prolonged, more subdued and does not rise it pitch.

5) And, thanks to those field guides, too many birders have been misled into mistaking the Northern Saw-whet Owl's primary call for the Boreal's. For reasons unknown, too many references — the Robbins guide and both the Eastern and Western Peterson guides included — still insist on likening the Boreal Owl's call to a high-pitched bell or dripping water. In reality, that description perfectly fits the saw-whet's call.

Also note the Northern Saw-whet can occasionally give some quite atypical calls on territory. One saw-whet I heard near Duluth several springs ago gave a rising, two-syllabled whistle or hoot, somewhat similar to the Burrowing Owl's call.

Woodpeckers: While the males of most bird species sing to establish breeding territory or attract a mate, woodpeckers drum instead. This drumming is typically done by both females and males, it can start as early as January, and it is unrelated to the pecking and probing woodpeckers do in search of food. Unfortunately, the drummings of most species (i.e., the Downy, Hairy, Red-bellied, Red-headed and Northern Flicker) lack any pattern and are usually indistinguishable from each other. Only the sapsucker's distinctive, erratic cadence would be easily recognized by most birders.

The drummings of the other three woodpeckers which breed in Minnesota can also be recognized with practice. Both the Pileated's and Black-backed's drumming sound slower than the others, with a drop in pitch and increase in speed at the end (and I admit I'm not sure about always telling these two apart). The Three-toed's drumming is also distinctively slow, but it tends to be shorter in duration than the other two, and it is typically two-parted, with a few diagnostic softer taps added at the end.

I have also read there are some differences among the otherwise similar drummings of the other species. The Hairy's and flicker's drummings are said to be faster and longer, the Downy's and Red-bellied's slower and shorter, with the Red-headed sounding fast and short. Comments from readers on this would certainly be welcome.

Woodpeckers also use their vocal chords, of course, and there are woodpecker vocalizations worth commenting on:

— The best place for the beginning listener to start would be learning the difference between the Downy's flatter, softer "pik" note and the Hairy's sharper, louder "peek".

— The primary call of the Black-backed Woodpecker is distinctive and worth learning since this species is rela

tively elusive and highly sought: listen for its creaking, metallic, somewhat squeaky "krick". Also note, contrary to what is generally thought, the Three-toed's corresponding call note is unlike the Black-backed's — to my ear it simply sounds like a Downy. (Note as well that both Black-backeds and Three-toeds also have a raspy, rattling, growling call.)

— The prolonged call of the Northern Flicker is easily learned, but it is often difficult to tell from the similar series of notes given by the Pileated. Usually the Pileated's series is erratic and uneven in tempo and easily recognized, but it can also be steadier and more flicker-like, although it then tends to be faster and higher-pitched than the flicker's.

— The typical Yellow-bellied Sapsucker call is a loud, distinctive "mew", although this sound is sometimes mistakenly attributed to the Gray Catbird. Sapsuckers also have a "churr" or "queer" call note, much like the Red-bellied's and Red-headed's calls — and I'll let you know when I figure out how to consistently separate these corresponding calls of these three species. Or, better yet, let me know. **8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.**

Changes Affecting the Minnesota Checklist

Robert B. Janssen

In the Fortieth Supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union *Check-List of North American Birds*, the following changes have been made which affect the *Checklist of the Birds of Minnesota* (December 1993).

The scientific name of the Great Egret changes from *Casmerodius albus* to *Ardea alba*.

The common name of the American Swallow-tailed Kite changes to Swallow-tailed Kite.

The scientific name of the American Golden-Plover changes from *Pluvialis dominica* to *Pluvialis dominicus*.

The common name of the Common Black-headed Gull changes to Black-headed Gull.

The common name of the Rufous-sided Towhee changes to Eastern Towhee.

Add Spotted Towhee *(Pipilo maculatus)* to the list of species after Eastern Towhee. The Spotted Towhee is added to the checklist based on numerous records in the state, mainly from the western regions.

Change the common name and scientific name of the Sharp-tailed Sparrow *(Ammodramus caudacutus)* to Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow *(Ammodramus nelsoni)*.

Change the common name of the Northern Oriole to Baltimore Oriole.

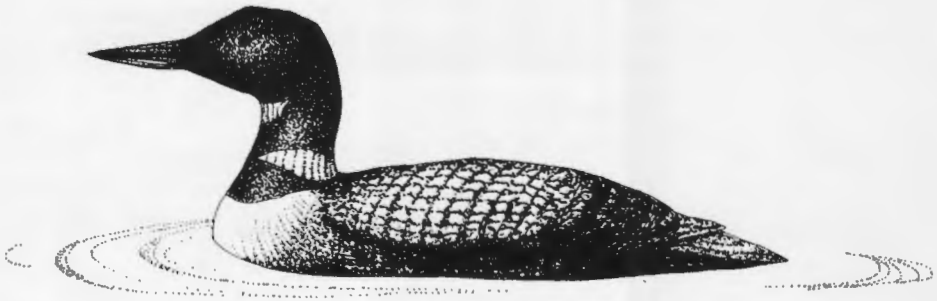
Add Bullock's Oriole *(Icterus bullockii)* to the species list after the Baltimore Oriole. Bullock's Oriole is added to the checklist based on an individual banded and photographed in Duluth (*The Loon* 41:41–42).

With the addition of Spotted Towhee and Bullock's Oriole, the Minnesota state list stands at 420 as of March 1996. This is an increase of seven species (with White Ibis, Crested Caracara, Curlew Sandpiper, Glaucous-winged Gull and Calliope Hummingbird also added) since the December 1993 Checklist of the Birds

of Minnesota was published.

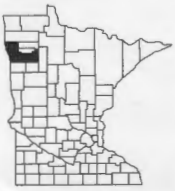
Until the official status of Spotted Towhee is determined by the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee (MORC), all records of this species should be documented. I would urge observers to send in all previous records of Spotted Towhees that they have observed in Minnesota to Kim Eckert, Chairman of MORC. Please give details on the observations including dates and locations. This information will give MORC an opportunity to determine the status of the Spotted Towhee in Minnesota. All future records of the Bullock's Oriole will have to be documented through MORC.

10521 S. Cedar Lake Rd., #212, Minnetonka, MN 55305.



NOTES OF INTEREST

SPRAGUE'S PIPIT IN POLK COUNTY, 31 MAY – 1 JUNE 1995 — Identification was based solely on vocalization; the bird was not seen. On 31 May 1995, at 9:00 A.M., I heard a high-pitched, descending song coming from high above a moderately-grazed pasture. It was very windy, so only parts of the song were audible. At that time, I was pretty sure it was a Sprague's Pipit (the only other bird it could have been was a Dunlin, which typically would not be found singing high above a pasture in western Minnesota). The bird sang sporadically during a one-hour period. I returned to the site the next morning (June 1) shortly after sunrise. The winds were calm, and immediately upon reaching the pasture, I clearly heard the distinctive, descending "ching-a-ring-a-ring..." song of a Sprague's Pipit. The bird was fairly close, but high overhead. As with the previous morning, I never did see the bird. The pipit sang regularly during the 20 minutes spent at the site. The bird was not found during subsequent visits the following week. The Sprague's Pipit's song was clearly heard, and cannot be confused with anything else (except Dunlin, mentioned above). Other species singing in the area included Upland Sandpiper, Horned Lark, Savannah Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Bobolink, and Western Meadowlark. All of these species have songs very different from Sprague's Pipit. (Associate Editor's Note: The Grasshopper Sparrow's alternate song resembles the Sprague's Pipit's, but it is only delivered from a perch on the ground, not while in flight.) I have heard Sprague's Pipits singing in Roseau County and at several sites in North Dakota.



I am familiar with songs of all Minnesota birds, as well as many other U.S. species. John Hockema was present on 1 June, and also heard the bird. **Steve Stucker, MN County Biological Survey, MN DNR – Section of Wildlife, Box 7, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155–4007.**

FIRST-WINTER GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL IN GRAND MARAIS — On 25 November 1995 in the early afternoon, I pointed out an immature Great Black-backed Gull near the fishing shack in Grand Marais, Cook County. Kim Eckert and several others concurred with the identification. There were approximately 4,000 Herring Gulls in the harbor area, along with several Thayer's and Glaucous Gulls, all feasting on the remains of the day's fish processing. In direct comparison to Herring Gulls on the same aspect of the dock, the Great Black-backed was obviously larger and stood taller on its long, pale pink legs. Its bill looked "heavy" compared to the Herring Gull's and was especially thick at the gonys. The bill was black except for pink areas on both mandibles near the base and there was a whitish nail. The eye appeared dark brown and there were a few dusky streaks posterior to the eye; the head was otherwise white except for fine streaking on the hindcrown and nape. The back feathers looked dark gray-brown with pale

Great Black-backed Gull, 25 November 1995, Grand Marais, Cook County. Photo by Peder Svingen.

edging. The wings at rest were overall dark brown, becoming darkest on the primaries. Its rump, upper tail coverts, and proximal tail contrasted sharply with a black subterminal tail band that was seen in flight. The entire underparts were white except for pale brown splotches and streaks along the flanks. The details on the bill appeared very similar to those on an immature Great Black-backed Gull seen by myself earlier in the month at Duluth; it is possible that the same individual was responsible for both sightings. **Peder Svingen, 2602 E. Fourth St., Duluth, MN 55812–1533.**

ANOTHER GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL IN DULUTH — On 12 November 1995, I

independently discovered an immature Great Black-backed Gull as it preened and stood on the breakwater at Canal Park in Duluth (several days later, I heard that a report of this species in Duluth from 11 November had been called in to the Minneapolis rare bird alert). This is the third year in a row that an immature Great Black-backed has been found at this exact location! The bird was obviously larger than the Herring Gulls nearby and stood taller on its long, pale pink legs. The bill looked massive compared to the Herring Gull's and was especially thick at the gonys. It was black except for a small, pink area near the base of the lower mandible and another pink area proximal to the nasal groove on the upper mandible, while the extreme tip (nail) was pale. The eye appeared dark with dusky streaking posteriorly; the head was otherwise white except for fine streaking on the hindcrown and nape. Although its plumage was in disarray while preening, most of the back feathers looked dark *gray* with pale tips, while the scapular feathers and wing coverts were dark *brown*. Overall, there was a less "checkered" pattern than I expected. The primaries were black and unmarked except for pale edging on the tips. The white rump and upper tail coverts were seen clearly during preening. The "tail band" was not well defined, due to a variable extent of black on the dorsal surface of the rectrices. The innermost pair (#1) and the outermost pair (#5) were mostly white on the proximal half of each feather, except for black internal barring. The rest of the tail looked black with pale tips on all rectrices. The ventral tail surface showed a more distinct subterminal band of brown across all rectrices. The under tail coverts and the rest of the underparts were white except for pale tan "splotches" on the sides of the breast. The pale markings on the bill, the blackish back feathers, and the extensive subterminal tail band all suggested second-winter plumage but Grant (*Gulls: a guide to identification*, 1986) notes that these characters are highly variable; the exact pattern of the greater coverts is cited as the best distinction between first-winter and second-winter plumages. Since I neither saw the bird in flight nor documented the exact pattern on the greater coverts of its inner wing, it is identified here as an immature, probably in first-winter plumage. **Peder Svingen, 2602 E. Fourth St., Duluth, MN 55812–1533.**

BALD EAGLE PREDATION ON A COMMON LOON — It was Thursday, 9 November

1995. My wife, Carm, and I were at our cabin on Clear Lake in Glen, Aitkin County, Minnesota. At 7:15 A.M., I awoke to find the seasons changed. An inch of snow covered the ground and ice covered most of the lake. Looking out at this wonder, activity caught my eye. From the western corner of the lake, where there was still some open water, I saw a mature Bald Eagle chasing another bird. When they came closer, I recognized the prey as a Common Loon. They were flying only a few feet above the ice. This continued for some time, with the loon trying to escape and the eagle hovering over it, not allowing the loon to become airborne. The chase continued until the loon was exhausted. At this time, the

birds were only about 30 yards from shore, directly in front of our cabin. The eagle set his talons into the loon and tried to fly with the struggling bird. Up and down they went until the loon gave in. At this time, they were about 60 yards from shore. The eagle killed and began eating the loon. We were able to watch the entire scene with a 40X spotting scope. A large juvenile eagle soon arrived and also began to eat. In a matter of an hour, the entire carcass was consumed and there was nothing to be seen but crows picking at the bloody snow. **Tom and Carm Pennaz, 208 – 74th Ave. N., Brooklyn Park, MN 55444.**

CAROLINA WREN IN DAKOTA COUNTY — In mid-December, Kathryn Cassem, a co-worker at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, said I would never believe what was coming to her feeder in Rosemount. She told me a Carolina Wren was coming to her window feeder. She first thought it was a sparrow of some kind, then saw how it cocked its tail. She looked in her Robbins field guide and easily confirmed it as a Carolina Wren. Kathryn works on call, so the next time I saw her, I asked if the bird was still coming to her feeder. She said it was, so I decided that on my next day off, I would try to see it. On 21 December 1995, I arrived at Kathryn's house at approximately 9:30 A.M. and stayed until about 4:30 P.M. and of course, the wren didn't show. I tried again on 12 January, 1996, from 9:30 A.M. until 2:00 P.M. Once again, no wren. Kathryn said she asked around the neighborhood and found four neighbors on her side of the block who had seen it at their feeders. These are the dates the wren was seen at Kathryn's feeder:

Caroliana Wren, January 1996, Rosemount, Dakota County. Photo by Kathryn Cassem.

6 December 1995 – 10:30 A.M.
16 December 1995 – 4:15 P.M.
19 December 1995 – 2:00 P.M.
29 December 1995 – 12:10 P.M.
4 January 1996 – 10:30 A.M.
10 January 1996 – 11:00 A.M.
11 January 1996 – 11:20 A.M.
18 January 1996 – 8:45 A.M. (next door), 3:30 P.M., 4:15 P.M., 4:25 P.M.
20 January 1996 – 11:15 A.M.
28 January 1996 – 12:20 P.M.

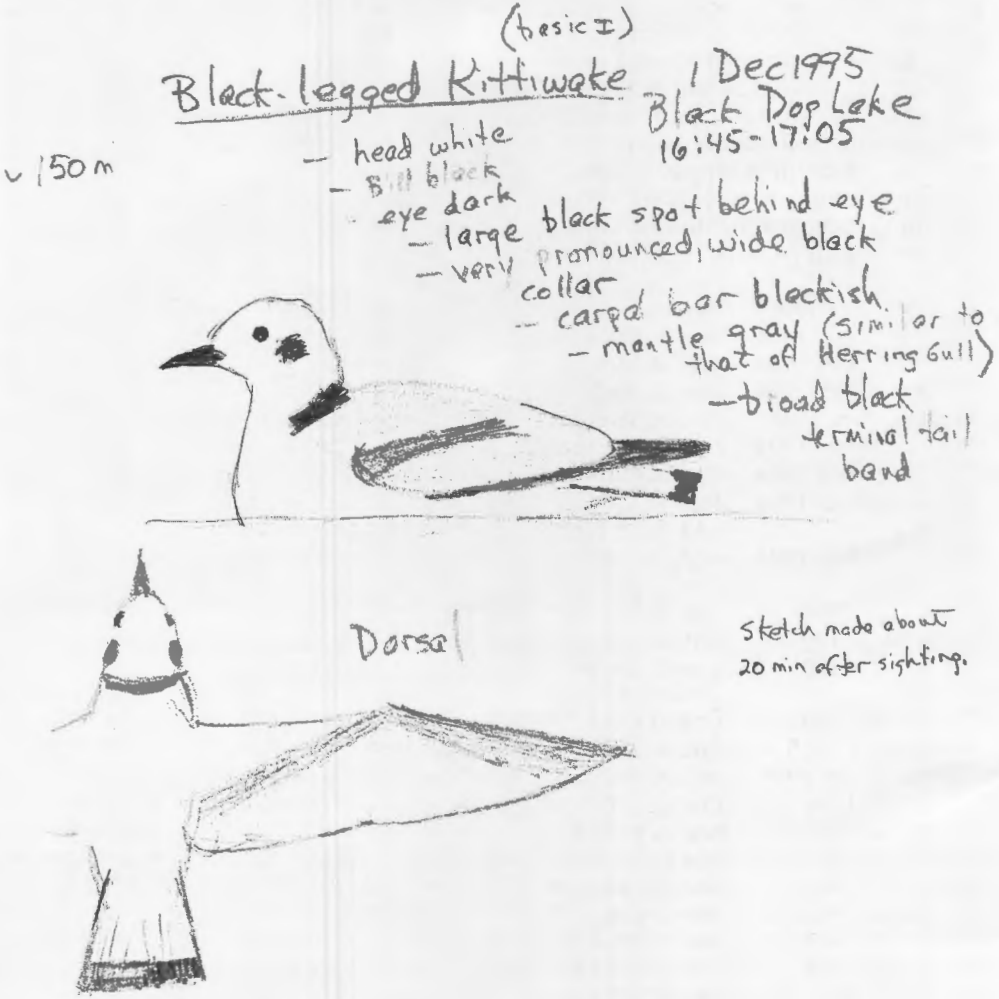
Deanne Endrizzi, 1410 Raleigh Drive, Burnsville, MN 55337.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE IN OTTER TAIL COUNTY — An immature Black-legged Kittiwake was found near death from starvation by two hunters on 12 November 1995 near Orwell WMA, Otter Tail County. It was subsequently turned over to Gary Otnes and rehabilitated with lots of minnows, supplemented with antibiotics, electrolytes, anti-fungals, and cod liver oil. The bird regained strength rapidly and was flown out east to be released at sea. **Steve Millard, 630 W. Laurel, Fergus Falls, MN 56537.**

Black-legged Kittiwake in captivity, Otter Tail County. Photo by Gary Otnes.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE IN DAKOTA COUNTY — First observed at 4:45 P.M. on 1 December 1995 (after sunset), then watched for two to three minutes as it fluttered back and forth, alternately landing and then taking flight again in and among the several thousand other roosting gulls (predominantly Herring, some Ring-billed). Finally, it settled in the water, and I continued watching it until 5:05 P.M. 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 dorsal 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 wing surface. The underwing pattern was not noted. The head and underparts were white, except for a bold black dime-sized spot behind and somewhat below the dark (blackish) 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

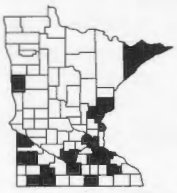
white with a broad terminal black band also an inch or so wide, was fanned most of the time in flight, and I could not detect a notched appearance — rather, it appeared straight or somewhat rounded. The bill was solid black, and had the characteristic shape of the genus *(Rissa)* — culmen gently decurved 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, of course, there were no individuals of that species for comparison). The blackish carpal bar and nape collar were also apparent on the swimming bird, contrasting with the gray back, which was about the



Black-legged Kittiwake, 1 December 1995, Dakota County. Sketch by Bruce Fall.

same shade as that of the Herring Gulls around it. Also, the primaries extended more than a bill length behind the tail. Two more observations the following day (2 December) before sunrise and again in better light in the late afternoon, confirmed all of the above field marks. The accompanying annotated sketch was made 20 minutes after the 1 December sighting, before any references were consulted. **Bruce A. Fall, 4300 – 29th Ave S., Minneapolis MN 55406.**

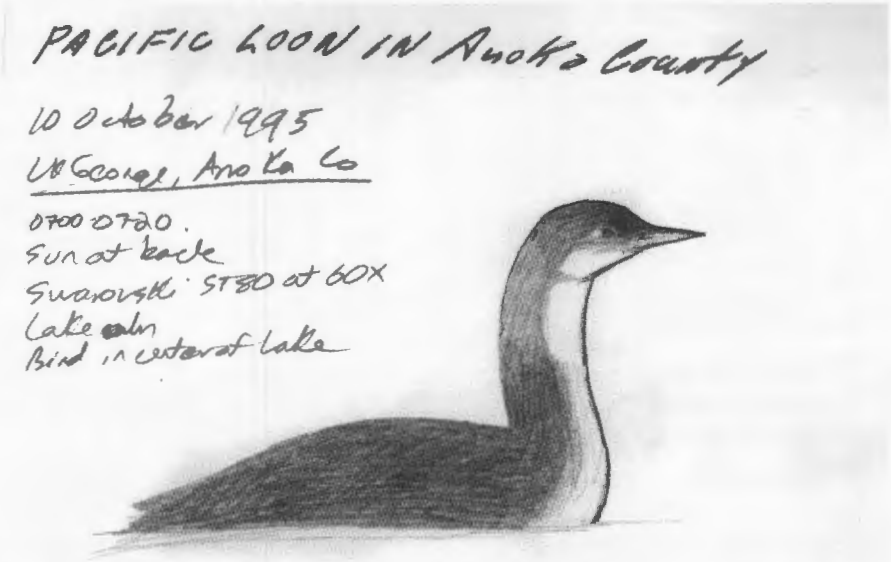
UNUSUAL NUMBERS OF WINTERING LONG-EARED OWLS, WINTER OF 1994–95 — The mild winter of 1994–95 may have contributed to the many reports of Long-eared Owls. Peder Svingen writes in ***The Loon*** (67:114), "This species is a rare winter visitant to the state, primarily in the southeast region and the average number of reports per winter for the past ten years is only three." I tallied the records from November 1994 to April 1995 and found reports of 56 individuals located in 22 different counties. Although many of the birds reported from late March to early April may have been spring migrants, there are reports of some birds still on the winter roosts to mid-April. The roost of 16 birds in Eagan and eight birds in a single willow tree in Hennepin County is an unprecedented number when compared to previous years. Thanks to Peder Svingen, Tony Hertzel, and Tom Boevers for information supplied. Listed below are the dates, number of birds, and locality I have been able to find:



5 November 1994	two at Freeborn Lake, Freeborn County
12 November 1994	one at Cloverdale, Pine County
14 November 1994	one at Lac Qui Parle County
17 November 1994	one at Rochester, Olmsted County
2 December 1994	two at Riverbend Nature Center, Faribault, Rice County
19 December 1994	one at Moorhead, Clay County
21 December 1994	one at Cannon River Boy Scout Camp, Goodhue County
26 December 1994	four at a WMA south of Faribault, Rice County (present until 13 April 1995)
27 December 1994	eight in one willow tree in Hennepin County (location unknown)
3 January 1995	one at Big Willow Park, Minnetonka, Hennepin County
10 January 1995	sixteen along Seneca Road, Eagan, Dakota County
14 January 1995	one at the arboretum at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Nicollet County
25 January 1995	one in Cook County
1 February 1995	one in Sibley County across river from LeSueur
2–3 February 1995	two at Tamarac Nature Center, Ramsey County
10 March 1995	one near Good Thunder, Blue Earth County
17 March 1995	one near Mora, Kanabec County
19 March 1995	one in Lake County
25 March 1995	one in Lake County
29 March 1995	one in Lyon County
29 March 1995	one in Lincoln County
31 March 1995	one at Wild River State Park, Chisago County
1 April 1995	two at WMA near Talcot Lake, Cottonwood County
1 April 1995	two in Nobles County
1 April 1995	one in WMA in Jackson County.

Raymond Glassel, 8219 Wentworth Ave. S., Bloomington, MN 55420.

PACIFIC LOON IN ANOKA COUNTY — On 10 October 1995 at Lake George, Anoka County, I observed a Pacific Loon. I was impressed with its small bill, small head, and thin neck. The head was not thicker than the neck. The neck was long and slightly curved or arched in posture. The bill seemed slightly upturned. The plumage was slightly demarcated between the hindneck and foreneck. There was dark feathering on the upperparts, darkest on forecrown and lores, becoming paler on upper hindneck. The lower hindneck was darker again. There was a prominent chinstrap. The back was an even dark color with no pale, scalloped edges; it seemed to be an adult. There was a small pale spot behind the eye, but otherwise the eye was entirely enclosed by dark feathering. The bill was pale except dark on upper edge of mandible. **Karl Bardon, 1430 – 100th Ave. NW, #212, Coon Rapids, MN 55433.**



Pacific Loon, 10 October 1995, Lake George, Anoka County. Sketch by Karl Bardon.

HENSLOW'S SPARROW SEEN IN RED LAKE COUNTY — On 11 October 1995, I saw a Henslow's Sparrow one quarter mile west of the Plummer Sewage Lagoons in Red Lake County. While I knew the sighting was unusual, I did not realize how unusual until I consulted Janssen's *Birds in Minnesota*. The following are my notes taken at the time of observation. It was a cloudy bright day, 9:35 A.M. I saw the bird at a distance of 75 feet at first and then at 50, using 10X40 binoculars. There were CRP fields on both sides of the road. I watched him for 20 minutes. While this is unusual behavior for a Henslow's, the one we saw at O.L. Kipp State Park in Winona County was out in the open for ten minutes, so I guess that Henslow's aren't always hiding in the bushes. At first, I must confess that I had no idea what kind of sparrow it could be. It was nothing common like a Song or Vesper Sparrow. Then I noticed the color of the bird was odd — a gold/green. The back was reddish-brown with the wings redder than the back. I

finally was getting somewhere when I realized that the bird had a large, very flat head and its beak was very large looking. It could not be a Grasshopper Sparrow because the bird was mainly olive-colored on its face and streaked on its breast and sides. The Baird's Sparrow does have streaks, but Baird's are not greenish-faced birds and they have lighter backs than the Henslow's and no reddish wings. LeConte's and even Sharp-tailed Sparrows are more likely in Red Lake County; however, they do not have enough streaking, their facial colors have too much orange, and the crown color is wrong in both species. While the back color of the Sharp-tailed was not too far off, there was no gray on the Henslow's upper back like there would be on a Sharp-tailed Sparrow. After I watched the bird for 20 minutes, he flew off. I saw no white outer tail feathers while he flew away. He did no vocalizations either — not surprising for fall. In summary, I saw a bird that was a different color of green on its face. Its head was large and flattened on the top, and it had an oversized beak. There were stripes going down the sides of the face from that beak. There were streaks on the breast and sides, and the back was a red-brown with redder wings. Despite its unusual location in Red Lake County, I decided that after comparison with other comparable species, the bird must be a Henslow's Sparrow. **Shelley Steva, Route 4, Box 18, Thief River Falls, MN 56701.**

Corrections to *The Loon*

Volume 67

In the Fall 1995 issue in the article "Possible Hybrid Blackpoll Warbler in Western Minnesota", pages 167–171, the table on page 170 incorrectly lists several field marks for Blackpoll Warbler. Replace with the following revised table:

Feature	Our Bird	Blackpoll	Carbonated Warbler
Cap	black	black	black
Cheek	yellow	white	yellow
Eyestripe	none	none	yellow
Mustache	present	present	absent
Throat	yellow	white	yellow
Flanks	streaked	streaked	streaked
Ventral Side	yellow	white	yellow
Wings	dark	dark	dark
Wingbars	two	two	two
Dorsal Side	dark	dark	dark
Legs	pale	pale	pale
Rump	dark	dark	yellow

Table 1. Similarities and differences between the bird at Big Stone N.W.R., Blackpoll Warbler, and Audubon's "Carbonated Warbler."

In the Winter 1995–96 issue in the article "The 1995 M.O.U. 300 Club and 1995 M.O.U. 200 County Club", pages 242–245, change Parker Backstrom's 300 Club total to 360, and add Carol Schumacher's total of 255 to the Winona County list.

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

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The Loon

SUMMER 1996

VOLUME 68 – NUMBER 2

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A Rock Ptarmigan at Grand Marais

Ken Hoffman

About 1:30 P.M. on 20 May 1996 we were walking west on the rocky part of Coast Guard Point in Grand Marais. Our dog Jessie was out of sight on our right when from her direction a white bird came flying over a rocky ridge and landed about 75 feet in front of us. My first thought was a white pigeon, but as it was coming down the black triangles at the sides of the tail caused me to call "ptarmigan" to Molly. We both had 7x35 binoculars and were able to observe him at our leisure for the next several hours.

The most obvious field mark was the black streak from the bill to the eye and extending slightly behind the eye. Also visible at times was a small amount of black on the outer part of the folded tail. Otherwise the bird appeared all white and had feathered legs with a black bill. Although we had no direct size comparison we felt the bird was smaller than the Ruffed Grouse we are so familiar with.

The ptarmigan proceeded to feed and rest at intervals on the bare rock point. We even saw him wet his feet in Lake Superior while crossing between rocks. People were passing by within 30 feet where he rested but this did not seem to bother him much. He seemed most concerned and alert when a Herring Gull circled over several times.

After the initial 15 minutes of observation I went back to get a field guide. When I returned to watch the bird, Molly left to call Arlene Randklev from the Coast Guard Building and asked that she call the Duluth hotline and then "get out here quick to see this bird".

We now knew that this was a male Rock Ptarmigan in winter plumage. Ron Randklev soon joined us to watch what we now knew was a first state record. We returned home to make more phone calls and also contacted the Cook County News Herald to see if they could send someone out to photograph the bird. Fortunately Ralph Latham was able to do just that and got many fine pictures that afternoon to document a remarkable record.

Rock Ptarmigan, 20 May 1996, Grand Marais, Cook County. Photo by Ralph Latham, Cook County News Herald.

We returned in the evening to join Kim Eckert and Sue Barton to watch the ptarmigan. It was quite actively feeding and completely circled the brushy part of the rock point on the harbor side. At no time did we see him go into the brush. The bird always stayed on the bare rock or else went along the rocks at the waters edge.

Our final memory of the day will be our visit with Kim and Sue with the sun going down and a rainbow at our backs as the ptarmigan moved about doing his feeding. Meanwhile Jessie the dog, in some way the star of the day, was more content to romp with her friend Rocky on the Coast Guard lawn than to get a last look at the Rock Ptarmigan.

HC 86, Box 199, Grand Marais, MN 55604.

Some Additional Comments on the Rock Ptarmigan in Grand Marais

Kim R. Eckert

The Rock Ptarmigan *(Lagopus mutus)* found by Molly and Ken Hoffman, with a little help from one of their dogs, would seem to most of us to be one of the most unlikely first state records ever to appear in Minnesota. Unfortunately it was only present for a short time at Grand Marais, Cook County, with only a handful of observers able to see it on the day of its discovery, 20 May 1996. (It was also probably still present on 21 May, since Frani Lowe of the Twin Cities had a brief sighting then of what appeared to be this individual).

Newspaper photographer Ralph Latham took some excellent photos of this bird, and the identification of a male Rock Ptarmigan in basic plumage, with its diagnostic black smudge around the eyes and on the lores, is quite straightforward. There is no need here, therefore, to provide a complete written description of this individual or to repeat information available in the standard field guides, although there are some points to consider when trying to evaluate this record and put it in context.

First of all, it was quite fortunate for this Rock Ptarmigan to be a male in basic plumage. If it had been a basic-plumaged female without any black around the eyes, there is the strong possibility we would have misidentified it as a Willow Ptarmigan *(L. lagopus)*, which has occurred previously in Minnesota. If it had been an adult of either sex in alternate plumage, the identification would also have presented some difficulty. At least the black visible on the outer thirds of this bird's tail clearly precludes White-tailed Ptarmigan *(L. leucurus)*, a species which would probably never occur east of the Rockies.

Secondly, the bird looked and acted entirely like a "normal" ptarmigan in the wild. I have observed dozens of Willow Ptarmigans over the years during my annual tours to Churchill, Manitoba, and it seems a safe assumption that Rocks and Willows have similar behaviors. As I wrote in my field notes, this individual showed no sign of any frayed feathers on its wings, tail or elsewhere in its plumage, which might have suggested captive origin. The bird's posture, manner of walking and flight behavior were all entirely typical for a ptarmigan, and its semi-wary behavior — allowing observers close, but not too close, approach — was similarly normal for a ptarmigan in the wild.

One initial concern we had that to some might suggest captive origin was the apparently abnormal length of the claws on its toes that Sue Barton and I noted. However, I am of the opinion the observed length of these claws is typical for a ptarmigan in the wild and clearly does not indicate prior captivity. Note especially the ptarmigan photos in *The Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding*, volume 1, pages 279 and 281 — the claws on these individuals are similar in length to those on the Grand Marais bird. And Bob Janssen sent me some photos of White-tailed Ptarmigans he observed in Colorado with similarly long claws. (The possibility of the Grand Marais ptarmigan being an escaped or released bird is still under review, however, since Willows, at least, are known to exist in game farms.)

Most Minnesota birders had never considered a vagrant Rock Ptarmigan to be a possibility here, and indeed this probably represents the first record ever for the lower 48 states However, there is clear precedence for this species to stray well south of its normal range to southern

Canada, with at least two records not far from the Minnesota border. It has been documented near Kenora, Ontario (only about 35 miles north of the Minnesota line), on 7 May 1993 (Alan Wormington, pers. comm.); near Sioux Lookout, Ontario, about 130 miles north of the Minnesota line (date unknown; A. Wormington, pers. comm.); at Old Wives Lake, Saskatchewan (about 75 miles north of the U. S. border) on 26 April 1995 (*Field Notes* 49:266); and at Elmsdale, Nova Scotia on 20 April 1922 (*Birds of Nova Scotia*, 3rd edition, by Robie Tufts).

Also note that the Grand Marais Rock Ptarmigan fits well within the pattern of vagrancy exhibited by these four records, with at least three of them are from late April or May. And, contrary to what one might initially assume, the basic plumage of the Grand Marais bird is exactly right for a vagrant at that time of year, since at least three of those southern Canada individuals were also males in basic plumage.

Finally, it would probably be worth examining Minnesota's previous Willow Ptarmigan records to see if any should be reassigned as "ptarmigan, sp." Indeed, it may even turn out that some of Minnesota's ptarmigan specimens might actually be Rocks. Three specimens were collected from the winter of 1933–34, and the fourth deserves especially close scrutiny since it was collected in 1914 on 20 April — a date that would seem to perfectly fit the Rock Ptarmigan's pattern! **8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.**

The Return of a Giant in the Bird World to Minnesota

Steve Kittelson

Like wolves, eagles, and a few other select species, swans have a special place in human culture. This link is evident very early in recorded history when the art and legends of ancient civilizations are studied. References to swans can be found in Greek mythology, Roman and Egyptian history, and the writings of Christian prophets on the European and Asian continents. Later, swans were used on coins in Germany and the badge of Henry IV in England where there are records of laws relating to the ownership of swans dating back to the 12th century A.D. (Banko 1960). Swans are a prominent part of the culture of the native peoples in North America. Through the centuries, the mystic appeal of these magnificent birds has endured. A local writer has written and is working on a production of a play featuring an old man and his spiritual connection to a swan. It would have been a great tragedy if any species of swan would have disappeared from our planet, especially the Trumpeter Swan *(Cygnus buccinator)*.

Swans belong to the family *Anatidae* and the subfamily *Anserinae* (Bellrose 1976). They have heavy bodies and short, strong, legs. Their large, webbed feet and long neck make them well adapted for feeding on aquatic vegetation in shallow marshes and lakes. They are not natural upland grazers like Canada Geese. Swans consume quantities of a variety of vegetation including tubers dug up from the bottom. Worldwide there are seven species of swan with four occurring in the wild in North America. The four species have varied bill colors and distinctive voices which are helpful in distinguishing the species.

The North American native swans include the most numerous Tundra *(Cygnus columbianus)*, formally called the Whistling Swan, the Trumpeter, and the Whooper *(Cygnus cygnus)*. The Whooper Swan breeds in Asia and northern Europe, but may be encountered on occasion along the west coast of the continent and along the Aleutian Islands during the winter season. The Mute Swan *(Cygnus olor)* is native to Europe, but has become established as a free-flying population in the eastern United States, Michigan, and Wisconsin due to accidental and intentional releases on this continent. Problems associated with the feral Mute Swan population have prompted states and provinces to take action to determine the extent of negative impacts on native waterfowl populations.

The Mute Swan is easily distinguished from the native swans by its bright orange bill and prominent black knob at the base of the bill in front of the eyes. Whooper Swans have a mostly bright yellow bill with a black base. The Trumpeter and Tundra Swans have black bills and feet with the Tundras usually having a small yellow spot on the base of the bill. The plumage of all four species is pure white after reaching one year of age. Immature swans, called cygnets, have a light gray plumage. The calls for these species are very different. The Mute is so named because it doesn't seem to have a call, however, it does have a "grunt or snort" type sound. Tundra Swans have a high pitched whoo-whoo call. The Whooper has a voice somewhat like the deep resonant, horn-like call of the Trumpeter, but is easily distinguished by the bill color. The call of the Trumpeter is produced by a sternal loop of the trachea.

Evidence indicates the two, native breeding species to our continent, the Tundra and the Trumpeter historically segregated themselves during the breeding season, with some overlap. Tundras inhabited the far northern reaches of the continent while Trumpeters appear to have occupied vast regions of the interior. Bones from Trumpeters have been found during excavations in Ohio and Illinois dating back more than 2500 years. It appears Trumpeters were numerous enough to be used for food and the bones used for tools (Banko 1960).

Written evidence of the presence of Trumpeters in North America begins in the 1600s with European exploration of the continent. As surveyors and trappers traveled into new regions in greater numbers, the references to swans in general and Trumpeters in particular increased. The Hudson Bay Company shipped swan skins by the thousands back to Europe during the 1700 and 1800s. The company did not make any distinction between the two species in it's records, but it seems likely that the Trumpeter was represented in great numbers due to its distribution across the interior of the continent. This is thought to be the beginning of a drastic decline in the original breeding population in North America. As European settlement continued during the later 1800s, uncontrolled subsistence hunting, habitat disturbance, in unison with the last of the skin, feather, and meat trade began to take a severe toll. By the 1830s, the Trumpeter appeared to be gone from the eastern portions of North America.

John James Audubon documented the winter range of the species as far south as Texas and Louisiana and reported many Trumpeters present in the Ohio and Mississippi River Valleys in the winter. No evidence can be found that Audubon ever documented a nest or cygnets on a breeding marsh (Banko 1960). The decline of the species is apparent in the records of the Hudson Bay Company. The swan skin trade began in earnest in the 1770s and continued into the early 1900s, with the number of skins being shipped ranging from 1,312 in 1854 to 122 in 1877. The disappearance of the species marched westward with the last documented breeding of Trumpeters in Minnesota in 1884 or 1885 in Meeker County. Two Trumpeters were reported by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service on 31 August 1937 to have occupied a Beltrami County marsh for the summer,

though no young were seen (Banko 1960). Roberts (1932) believed that Trumpeters formerly bred in the prairie and sparsely wooded areas of Minnesota. Leach (1977) reported two adult Trumpeters and one cygnet at Lake Traverse in Traverse County in October, 1976.

Trumpeter Swans reached a low point thought to be less than 70 swans by the 1930s. The remnant population survived in the remote Red Rocks Lake area in southwestern Montana. Efforts to keep the species from going extinct began with the establishment of Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in that region. It was not until the middle 1900s that more extensive surveys revealed that some of the swans wintering at Red Rock Lakes were actually birds flying down from the a small breeding site in the Grande Prairie region of Alberta. Periodic reports of the presence of a small breeding population of Trumpeters in Alaska were also verified during this time period.

Plans to restore the Trumpeter to its original place in Minnesota began in the 1960s when the Hennepin County Park Reserve District (now Hennepin Parks) obtained 40 swans from Red Rock Lakes to establish a breeding flock in their park reserves. This flock has grown and 245 birds hatched before 1996, expanding their range in east-central Minnesota.

Plans to expand the restoration process in Minnesota were outlined in 1982 (Henderson and Cooper 1982). The Nongame Wildlife Program of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources would build on the efforts initiated by the Hennepin County Park Reserve District to accelerate the restoration by establishing a population in northwestern Minnesota. In that year, the first eggs were also acquired to test the rearing process in preparation for future acquisitions and releases. Swans acquired from 1982–1985 came from Red Rock Lakes and Lacreek National Wildlife Refuges, the Minnesota and Brookfield (Chicago) Zoos, and private propagators. For the first time, a permit was granted to obtain swans from the Trumpeter population in Alaska. Annual collections of fifty eggs were collected in 1986, 1987, and 1988, from the Minto Flats region west of Fairbanks. They were collected from nests after approximately three weeks of incubation and transported to facilities at the Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area to complete the incubation and rearing of the young.

In 1987, the first release of 21 swans took place in Becker County, in the vicinity of Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge in northwestern Minnesota. The swans are two years old at the time of release, but have been kept wing clipped to prevent their escape from the holding pens. Spring releases give the swans a chance to acclimate to their new surroundings and imprint on the locale before they molt in July and early August, grow new flight feathers, and became airborne for the first time in their lives. Annual releases since that time have totaled nearly 250 swans. Most have been released around the core Becker County release site and additional northwestern Minnesota locations in cooperation with Itasca State Park, and the White Earth and Red Lake Reservations. However, in 1988, five swans were released at Swan Lake in Nicollet County and in 1992, eight swans were released in Itasca County, and in 1994, four swans were released in St. Louis County. The Itasca and St. Louis County birds were to supplement production from a pair of Hennepin Parks' swans that had pioneered into Itasca County as resident breeders.

The 1994 release totaled 38 swans and included 19 Trumpeters captured in Alaska in September, 1992. A late spring had placed the survival of many cygnets in doubt as the fall migration and winter approached. A permit allowed the Nongame Wildlife Program to salvage some of these birds as a final boost to our restoration population. Subsequent releases have included offspring from captive breeding pairs purchased or donated from the Minnesota Zoo, the Brookfield Zoo, the Tulsa Zoo, the Topeka Zoo and private propagators.

A ten-year cooperative effort between

the Minnesota D.N.R., the Iowa D.N.R., and the North Heron Lake Game Producers Association began in 1995 when 12 swans were released at Heron Lake in Jackson County, Minnesota. Iowa released swans 20 miles south of Heron Lake at Spirit Lake, Iowa. Funding and logistical support are provided by the game producers and the Minnesota Zoo continues to donate swans or hold swans acquired from other sources until their release. Ten additional swans were released in 1996. Heron Lake is a large watershed restoration project. Trumpeter Swans were documented as a nesting species at Heron Lake in 1883 (Banko 1960). The return of Trumpeter Swans to the region after an absence of more than 100 years is an important part of the restoration.

Contingency plans were in place in case the Trumpeters from the first Becker County release in 1987 did not migrate with the coming of the fall freeze-up. These efforts proved to be unnecessary as the birds moved south ahead of the advancing lake freeze line. Trumpeters are winter hardy and can remain in northern locations if a source of food and open water are available to them. Powerplants and dams have provided sites unavailable to swans of the pre-1900s era. Two such sites in Minnesota have became popular with portions of the restored flock. In 1995–1996 nearly 170 Trumpeters over-wintered on the Mississippi River below the powerplants at Monticello. This group included birds migrating south from northern Minnesota and birds from the western areas of the Twin Cities that migrated north the short distance to take advantage of the open water and a tradition of public feeding of waterfowl along the river. This site has become a "mixing pot" of Trumpeter Swan cultures. Pair bonding normally occurs on the wintering grounds and is strengthened during the spring migration and courtship at the breeding site. Consequently, mixed pairs of swans originating from the metropolitan area and northern Minnesota swans have been documented in both regions of the state.

A second site of significant overwintering of Trumpeters in Minnesota is the Otter Tail River in Otter Tail County. Census data in the early winter of 1995–1996 indicated 80–90 swans were present along the Otter Tail River, while approximately 100 were on the Mississippi River at Monticello. The numbers of swans at Monticello continued to climb past the 150 mark as winter progressed, finally reaching the 165–175 range. In January, 1996, an aerial survey along the Otter Tail River located 86 swans! The increase in swan numbers at Monticello was not the result of swans moving down from Otter Tail County. More than 250 swans were wintering at the two locations and included aproximately 25% young of the year! The remainder of an estimated pre-migration, 1995 free-flying flock of 350 Trumpeters migrated south to locations in Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Texas.

Swans leaving Minnesota generally stay west of the Mississippi River, though documented sightings have occurred in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Indiana. One errant swan, wing tag #98, spent the winter of 1989–90 at a country club in Alexandria, Virginia outside of Washington, D.C. The club was closed for the winter and the swan apparently spent the days at the club, retiring to the backwaters of the Potomac River for the night. This swan was reported in central Minnesota the following spring and in Iowa in December, 1990, apparently taking a more southerly route the following fall. Trumpeters from Minnesota have been documented as far west as northeastern Colorado.

The restored flock must establish new traditions of migration based on the resources currently available to them. Hennepin Parks has evidence indicating that one site in Oklahoma has been used by a continuous line of Trumpeters for the last ten years (Compton pers. comm.). As the numbers continue to grow successful migrants will pass these traditions onto their offspring. A plan is currently being drafted for approval by the flyway councils to provide more direction and in-

creased cooperation among the states to accomplish the goal of a migratory population in the Midwest. Similar cooperating restorations in South Dakota, Iowa, Wisconsin and Michigan have produced a flock estimated at nearly 1000 Trumpeters in the interior population. Birds marked by these restorations are as follows: the Minnesota DNR uses orange wing tags and the Michagin DNR uses green. Hennepin Parks, Wisconsin, Iowa and South Dakota use yellow or green neck collars.

And the numbers are growing. Starting slowly with the captive pairs at Hennepin Parks producing young that were allowed to fly-free at two years of age during the 1970s, then releases by the Nongame Wildlife Program beginning in 1987. The first documented nesting by the released swans in northern Minnesota came in 1988. One pair apparently returned to the Becker County area in the spring, then migrated across to Aitkin County where they hatched two young, which did not fledge. A second pair nested near Erskine, Polk County, fledging one cygnet. In 1989, five pairs hatched ten cygnets with three reaching fledge stage. The fledge rate improved dramatically in 1990 when 15 cygnets fledged of 17 hatched from seven pairs. By 1991, the number of nest attempts was estimated at 15 with a known hatch of at least 42 cygnets and 28 known to have fledged. The Trumpeters were beginning to pioneer into new areas to the north and east and total counts were becoming increasingly difficult during the breeding season.

As the number of breeding age birds in the wild has increased they have taken over the task of adding to the flock. Nearly 300 cygnets have hatched statewide during the period 1994–1996 as increased numbers of wild hatched birds have reached the 3–4 year breeding age and have successfully hatched young in the wild. Normally, cygnets are not banded in northern Minnesota to reduce disturbance on the breeding marshes. One cygnet, wing tag #9, hatched in Becker County in 1989 from a pair released in 1986, was marked when it was necessary to capture it for health reasons. This swan is now paired and has contributed several offspring to the free-flying flock, including five in 1995, documenting second generation wild hatches in northern Minnesota. These hatches far outweigh the current releases from captive stock of 10–20 birds per year.

Totals from this year are still being tallied, but it is hoped that more than forty pairs nested in eastern and northern Minnesota. Some pairs are not documented until the fall migration, because they nest in remote areas that are impossible to check adequately, except by plane. It is too costly to conduct aerial surveys on vast expanses like the Red Lake Bog of northern Minnesota to locate outlying pairs. One such swan has wing tag #125. A female obtained from the Brookfield Zoo, she was released in Becker County in 1990. She nested at an unknown location in 1991 and 1992, returning to the Otter Tail River wintering site with an unmarked mate and four young in 1991 and five young in 1992. It was not until 1993 that a report was received from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources that #125 had been documented with an unmarked mate and seven cygnets in a remote area northeast of Kenora, Ontario.

We can only wonder how many pairs are really out there in remote areas. But, the swans are continuing down their path of life with or without our knowledge.

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White-winged Crossbill Nest In Rice County

Jon Little and Jacob Langeslag

The winter of 1995–1996 proved to be a good year for White-winged Crossbills in Rice County. I and a few other birders from Faribault had been watching a flock that spent most of the winter three miles south and one mile east of town. The area is within the Faribault Wildlife Management Area. The birds ranged between two areas that are separated by a road and open fields, being about 1/2 mile apart. We readily found them all winter at either of these spots. The east site is a thick plantation of 20 foot tall spruce, approximately ten acres in size. The west one, which encompasses an old farmstead (part of the previous state school farm system), is a stand of mixed deciduous and old-growth conifer, surrounded by poplar, shrub, sumac, and spruce plantings. On various visits we counted anywhere from a few birds to 25–30 on 18 February 1996.

On 3 March, Jacob Langeslag related that he had observed 14 birds in the east area. He noted that all of them appeared to be paired up. Every female was in close association with a male, often eating together on the same branch. The males were singing less than we had noticed before, but appeared to be very territorial, always fighting. Both male and female of each pair would chase off other pairs. When he told this to me, from my experience studying breeding birds, I knew that this was significant. I judged that in being paired up, they were preparing to depart toward their normal breeding grounds in the north.

On 9 March I received a call from Jacob about an observation he had made of a female. At 2:00 P.M., he had stopped at the west plot along the adjacent road, and walked in toward the north. He spotted a pair of birds in a spruce tree and watched their activity for about two minutes. Shortly thereafter, he found the bird carrying what appeared to be nest material in her bill. She then flew into a nearby spruce tree, about eight feet above the ground. The tree was about 18 feet tall, typical of the rest in the area. He observed her moving amongst the branches and then leaving. When he approached the spot, he noticed a structure that looked like a nest. After seeing this, he left the scene. When I got his call, trusting his birding sense, I went with him to investigate. We found the nest and stood nearby with my camcorder. About two minutes later, we heard both the male and female calling from a short distance. Right then, the female flew into the nest tree and began to deposit more material. Over the course of ten minutes she was coming and going, gathering material, and adding to the nest. All the while, the male stayed close by.

On 10 March, Jacob and I returned at 8:00 A.M. to set up my camcorder on a tripod. We then retreated to a vantage point about 30 yards away. As we watched, we saw the female approach and land on top of a spruce tree 30 feet. from the nest tree. We noticed that she had a rather large gray feather in her mouth. She then flew into the nest tree, disappeared for a little time, then flew out, with nothing in her bill. Later observation of the video revealed that she added the feather as lining to the nest. After she flew off, we removed the camera and left the scene. At 4:00 P.M. that same afternoon, we returned to our vantage point but did not see any bird, although we watched for 20 minutes. They may have been off feeding.

I returned on the next two days, watched the nest tree between 11:00 A.M.

White-winged Crossbill nest, 22 March 1996, Faribault, Rice County. Photo by Jon Little.

and noon, but saw nothing. As 10 March was the first of three days of strong south winds, I felt at that time that the birds had abandoned the nest and flown back north.

On 16 March, Jacob and I returned. Thinking that all of the birds had left, we approached the nest. Right then, two males flew to the top of a tree just 20 feet. from the nest tree. We also saw another bird land not far away that appeared to be a female. All three flew away. Surprised and not knowing what to expect, we quickly departed. But I still believed that the nest had been abandoned.

On 21 March, Jacob called to say that he had found a female on the nest on 20 March. At 11:00 A.M., 22 March, we went to the spot, equipped with my camera and ladder to check the nest. Upon approach, we heard the male and female giving alarm calls. The female flushed from the nest and I quickly set up to photograph it. During the two minutes or so that it took, Jacob recorded the birds on video. As soon as we left, the female returned directly to the nest. From past experience, I believe that no harm was done by this disturbance. All of our encounters with the flock throughout the winter proved them to be very tolerant of human presence. We often got within 15 feet or so and were basically ignored by them. While building the nest on 9 March, the female flew right past my head and paid no attention.

The nest was very well built, made mostly of short spruce branch cuttings and lined with feathers. It was situated approximately eight inches from the trunk, set upon a horizontal branch, and tucked under another short branch that hid the nest from the top. It contained three eggs. All three eggs had the appearance of the picture in *A Field Guide to the Nests, Eggs, and Nestlings of North American Birds*. They were smooth and glossy; oval to subelliptical, 18 x 14 mm. These measurements, made later, showed them actually to be smaller than described in most field guides and is evidence that this may have been a young female. They were whitish with dark spots (color of spots was undetectable). Being very early in the year, it was obviously in no danger of intrusion by Brown-headed Cowbirds.

We noted that the nest tree had no cones, whereas most of the trees in the area were quite full of cones. There was an abundant crop in the whole area, thus showing how a large flock could be supported all winter. Our observations also confirmed what is described in field guides as to their food choice. Although the pines in the area were also quite full of cones, this species, as opposed to Red Crossbills, almost invariably prefers spruce cones. Only once did I see some eating in a pine tree. Even amongst the spruce trees, they showed an affinity for certain ones and not others. Trees that

had been eaten from were easily noticeable, the ground underneath being covered with cone droppings. Some trees with abundant cones were left untouched, even though they were right next to trees that had been eaten from. There are various theories for this phenomenon, but for whatever reason, the birds prefer certain ones.

On 23 March, after confirming the existence of eggs, Jacob and I showed the nest to Forest Strnad. I could see the female's head and back protruding above the nest. When we entered the area we heard the male calling. We saw him flying about 75 feet overhead, performing a flight dance similar to that of an American Goldfinch. He flew back and forth in a circle, rising and falling as he sang. With goldfinches, such a display is described as a "deep-loop-flight". He then flew to a nearby poplar, perched on the top, and started to give the "wink-wink-wink" call that he uses when near his mate. Of the different phonetic descriptions of this call given in various field guides, I prefer this one. We then left. We decided not to report the nest, in order to protect the birds from further disturbance. Our intent was to have Forest Strnad band the hatchlings at the proper time.

On 25 March, we awoke to a blizzard with heavy snow. I checked the nest on 26 March. I found it abandoned and completely covered with snow. I returned later with Forest Strnad to get a photograph of it. While doing this, I noticed one male crossbill nearby. I was encouraged to see that they were still in the area. As I was brushing the snow off to check whether there were frozen eggs or dead hatchlings, the nest broke free from the branch. I then decided to collect it and donate it to the J. F. Bell Museum. I contacted Dr. Robert Zink of the University of Minnesota, who made arrangements to do this. On 30 March, we met with John Klicka at the University of Minnesota, who accepted the nest.

On 27 March, I found a pair and watched them feed for 45 minutes. Assuming that this was the original nesting pair, I hoped that they might attempt to re-nest.

On 28 March, Jacob saw five males and one female at the East area.

On 31 March, at the same spot, he found one pair that appeared to be mated.

On 5 April, Jacob and I found a pair roosting high in a stand of small Cottonwood trees at the East location. They appeared to be sunning themselves. We judged that they probably did not have an active nest, or else the female would not have been there.

On 14 April, Jacob called at 10:00 A.M. to tell me that he had just seen another nest being built. He found it as he watched a female carrying nest material into a tree. He had stopped along the road and heard crossbills calling. He saw a male and heard a female calling from inside of a tree. When he approached, the female flew out toward the male and both flew away. Five minutes later, he saw the female return with nest material in her mouth. She entered the site and worked it into the nest. Later, he reported seeing the male nearby with material in his mouth also. Whether it was nest material or food, he couldn't tell. The tree was about 20 feet away from the original nest tree. In spite of a lack of evidence, we assume that this was the original pair that was trying to re-nest.

After Jacob called, I went with him to the spot. We saw what looked like a partially built nest right next to the trunk, about 15 feet from the ground. Looking with binoculars from below, I saw some dry spruce stems similar to those that made up the first nest. Also, mixed among them and quite noticeable, was some stringy, pure-white material that appeared to be either rabbit fur or deer hair. From our only observable angle of sight, there was not any distinct shape to the structure. We did not find either bird in the area. Shortly after we left, the area was covered with four inches of snow.

On 17 April, I looked from under the tree and could see that the nest had taken further shape. I saw an

understructure of dead spruce stems as before, with the white material woven in. I saw no sign of either bird, but as it was extremely windy, it is possible that the female was on the nest and I didn't notice. On later visits we saw no birds.

On 30 April, I stopped at the area and saw a pair of Brown-headed Cowbirds nearby on the top of a poplar tree. I approached the nest tree and flushed two Mourning Doves. Being that we had not encountered crossbills within the last two weeks, I decided to climb the tree and inspect the nest. I had expected to find a nest which was identical to the first one. The base was similar, being made up of dead spruce stems. But the lining was almost entirely woven with grass, neat and compact, looking very much like that of a Chipping Sparrow. Also, I noted a small piece of white string woven within the grass. There were only a few small feathers making up the lining. I concluded that it was the same female as before when I realized that she had already used her brood patch feathers in the first nest. There was one cowbird egg. As I believed that the crossbills were gone, I decided to leave the egg in the nest and see what happened.

On 2 May, the nest had two cowbird eggs, one slightly larger than the first, but typical.

On 6 May, I could see from below that there was fluffy material protruding out of the nest. I climbed up and found that the eggs were gone and the nest had been partially ripped apart, presumably by a raccoon or opossum. My deduction after the second nest attempt is that the birds may have left the area sometime after 14 April, or after the cowbird intrusion. Neither bird was seen later than 14 April. It appears that there was never a crossbill egg laid in this nest. Since very little is known about their nesting period, it may be that this is one of the species that will simply abandon a nest after a cowbird intrusion. Or it could be that either the male or the female was a victim of predators. Being far out of normal breeding range, and normally being very social, they also may simply have returned north. We had no further encounters with them.

Birds in Minnesota lists the White-winged Crossbill as an uncommon to common winter visitant mainly in northern regions. In most years it is rare to uncommon in southern regions. There is some evidence that they breed in the north, as fledged birds have been seen being fed by adults. However, no actual nests had previously been found. Since there have been no published accounts to date, this apparently is the first nest ever found in the state. As erratic as this species is in its wanderings and habits, there is no way to tell why this unusual event occurred this far south. Considering the type of habitat that these birds frequent, often in inaccessible regions, it is understandable why little is known about them. I believe that a nest out of range like this may not be all that uncommon. It is possible that it has happened before and simply gone undetected. Is it just a single occurrence or are there more birds out there doing it? Only more study can answer these questions.

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Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, 21 September 1995, Carlos Avery Refuge, Anoka County. Photo by Karl Bardon.

The Fall Season
(1 August to 30 November 1995)

Paul Budde, Scott Krych, Carol Schumacher, and Tom Tustison
Foreword by Peder Svingen

Waterbirds and gulls provided most of this season's excitement, especially the well-watched ***Yellow-billed Loon*** *on Mille Lacs Lake and the unexpected* ***Glaucous-winged Gull*** *that remained for over two months in the Twin Cities area. For others, the obliging and charismatic* ***Northern Wheatear*** *in Duluth evoked flights of fancy. Tundra fantasies soon vanished with the onset of early winter!*

In contrast to last fall's five, only one **Red-throated Loon** was found, but at least three **Pacific Loons** were noteworthy. The juvenile **Yellow-billed Loon** found by a *Minnesota Birding Weekends* tour group was the fourth for the state but the first to be easily refound after discovery; its grisly demise in the talons of an eagle reminds us that vagrancy is risky for the individual bird. Yet another **Clark's Grebe** was found in western Minnesota and one to two others were refound at Agassiz N.W.R. Thirteen of approximately seventeen acceptable records

have occurred during the past five years!

Numbers of "southern" colonial waterbirds were disappointing. The two **Snowy Egrets** from summer lingered into early August. Only one **Little Blue Heron** and only four **Cattle Egrets** were found. No **Yellow-crowned Night-Herons** were reported.

Early freeze-up pushed waterfowl out of western Minnesota by early November. The **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** at Roseau W.M.A. was unusually far north but this species should be looked for again in Minnesota since its populations are expanding dramatically in Arizona and the Gulf States. Two **Greater White-fronted Geese** in Roseau County on 7 September were record early. Numbers of all three scoter species were down on Lake Superior but all were detected elsewhere. It appears that the **Surf Scoter** has become the "default" species when scoters are detected away from Lake Superior, although the **White-winged Scoter** must still be carefully eliminated. Most interesting was the male **Barrow's Goldeneye** seen briefly in Ramsey County; probably the same that individual subsequently overwintered in Scott County.

Less favorable winds and fewer days of counting (98 as compared to 107 in 1994 and 103 in 1993) accounted in part for lower counts of diurnal raptors at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve (H.R.N.R.) in Duluth. The composite total of **Sharp-shinned Hawks** declined for the third straight year to 17,897 but still compares well to the all-time record of 21,974 set in 1976; as cited last fall in the foreword to *The Season*, numbers migrating along the East Coast have been depressed. Recent migration of this accipiter at H.R.N.R. appears stable when number/hour of counting/year is calculated. As always, these data are courtesy of Molly Evans and H.R.N.R.

Year	Count days	Hours counting	Composite total	Number per hour
1991	105	1130	18,524	16.39
1992	100	1033	16,288	15.76
1993	103	1094	20,206	18.46
1994	107	1134	19,183	16.91
1995	98	1019	17,897	17.55

Sharp-shinned Hawks at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve.

Many observers comment on the apparent scarcity of **Gray Partridge** and **Sharp-tailed Grouse** but most do not provide data. Observers are hereby requested to do so each season, with a reminder that number of individuals should always be listed on the seasonal report form for species marked with an asterisk.

Similar to last fall, shorebird migration was uneventful. Three **Red Knots** were found in three widely scattered locations, including Duluth which may be the best place to search for this rare wader in both spring and fall migration. **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** were reported from at least nine counties but numbers were modest.

In contrast to last fall, **jaegers** were scarce with only seven reports. The adult **Little Gull** on Mille Lacs Lake in early November was unusual compared to other Minnesota records but the species may be overlooked in fall (***The Loon*** 64:232–233). No fewer than three **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** frequented metro area lakes; a disturbing trend of decreasing numbers of observers providing any documentation for Casual species continues. Not so with the first state and regional record of **Glaucous-winged Gull**! This well-watched adult was carefully documented by Karl Bardon, Bruce Fall and others, with numerous photographs and detailed sketches. This season's gathering of rare *larids* concluded with three **Great Black-backed Gulls**, two **Black-legged Kittiwakes**, and three **Sabine's Gulls!** All were juveniles with both kittiwakes in first-winter plumage and all three Sabine's in juvenal plumage, as expected.

Snowy Owls were scarce, but unusual numbers of **Northern Hawk**, **Great Gray**, and **Boreal Owls** arrived as harbingers of the invasions to follow. A record number (1430+) of **Northern Saw-whet Owls** was banded at H.R.N.R.; the previous high was 1102 in 1989!

Unprecedented in anyone's memory

were the large flocks of **Black-capped Chickadees**, sometimes high overhead, migrating along the North Shore of Lake Superior in October. The **Northern Wheatear** in Duluth was appreciated for its upright stance, endearing behavior, and pastel plumage that offset its black-and-white tail pattern in flight. This is another species that should be looked for again in Minnesota. The eight **Townsend's Solitaires** were only one shy of last fall's total; as usual, most (seven) were along the North Shore of Lake Superior while the eighth was "inland" at Hoyt Lakes. **Swainson's Thrushes** in the north-central and northeast regions from early September through early October were unusually conspicuous and apparently increased in numbers. The total of thirteen records of **Varied Thrush** was the most for any fall season in Minnesota.

The consensus on warbler migration was more unified than in past seasons. Numbers of **Chestnut-sided** and **Magnolia Warblers** were up from last fall in the Twin Cities. Our most active observers agreed that **Cape May**, **Blackburnian**, and **Bay-breasted Warblers** were especially scarce. Steve Carlson counted an alarming 52 Bay-breasteds, his lowest fall count ever; although his data are not strictly controlled for observer hours or other variables, this total is even lower than last fall's 63 and can be contrasted to the fall average of 149 between 1988 and 1993. Similar to last fall, more **Black-throated Blue Warblers** than usual were detected as migrants and overall numbers of **Blackpoll Warblers** were up. Migration of warblers peaked in late August and early September, with 22 species present on Park Point in Duluth on 3 September. The Lakewood Pumping Station census of fall migration (***The Loon*** 67:47–49) tallied 75,050 migrants during 56 hours of counting on 28 dates between 21 August and 20 October. The average of 1340 migrants/hour can be compared to 1400/hour during daily coverage in 1988–1990.

As recently noted by Robert Janssen (***The Loon*** 68:66–67) the status of **Spotted Towhee** in Minnesota is unclear and observers have a unique opportunity to contribute data. All records of "Rufous-sided Towhee" are referred to **Eastern Towhee** in *The Season* unless documented as the western species. Documentation was received for several unusual occurrences of sparrows, most notably the late **Henslow's Sparrow** in Red Lake County and the small group of **Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows** at Carlos Avery W.M.A. in Anoka County. Among the Regular species not reported this fall, the absence of **Smith's Longspurs** was most noteworthy.

Weather Summary: August was hot throughout Minnesota but especially in the southeast region which was more than six degrees above average for the month. Precipitation there was close to average but central Minnesota was more than an inch above average during August. The cities of Duluth, Grand Rapids, Morris, and St. Cloud were hot and wet in August; all were three to four degrees above normal and approximately three inches of rain above normal. September was cool and dry in southern regions and close to average elsewhere. An abrupt transition to autumn occurred on 22–23 September as high pressure surged into the Great Plains and the Midwest, dropping temperatures and shattering previous record lows for many cities to the south of Minnesota. October was relatively unremarkable despite a succession of cold fronts. However, everyone remarked on the cold temperatures in November, presaging the bitter winter of 1995–96. Warroad was more than ten degrees below the monthly November average while statewide it was seven below the average! Minnesota's west-central region was the "warmest" with temperatures 5.8 degrees below the monthly average! November precipitation was close to average.

Acknowledgments: Since the Fall 1983 Season, Steve Carlson has helped compile the spring and fall seasonal reports. He has decided to "retire" and continue birding! His insightful analyses and careful attention to detail have contributed

greatly to The Season. Special thanks to Steve for continuing to report his data on warbler migration through the Twin Cities. Kim Eckert and Anthony Hertzel consistently report data called in to the Duluth and statewide hotlines. Carol Schumacher summarized sightings posted on the Minnesota Birding Network. Kim Eckert also provided data from the Lakewood Pumping Station census. Data from Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve in Duluth was provided by Molly Evans.

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

Red-throated Loon
One report of a juvenile on 10/6 Duluth, St. Louis Co. *fide* KE.

PACIFIC LOON
At least three birds were found and all were relatively early: one or two birds **9/21**–10/7 St. Louis mob; an adult **10/10** Lake George, Anoka Co. KB (***The Loon*** 68:74); a juvenile **10/17** Lake Winona, **Winona** RJ, CS.

Common Loon
Seen in 14 north and 10 south counties with a peak of 340 on 10/8 at Mille Lacs Lake KB.

YELLOW-BILLED LOON
A juvenile and fourth state record 11/11–13 on Mille Lacs Lake, Crow Wing Co. KE *et al.* (***The Loon*** 68:59–60).

Pied-billed Grebe
Peak of 140 on 10/14 Becker BBe *et al.*; peak of 170 on 10/13 Anoka KB.

Horned Grebe
Early south **9/26** St. Louis RJ, 10/7 McLeod KB; seen in nine north and five south counties with a late sighting on 11/25 St. Louis CM.

Red-necked Grebe
Seen late on 11/25 St. Louis KE; reported in eight north and four south counties.

Eared Grebe
Reported in only three north and two south counties.

Western Grebe
Sightings in two north and eight south counties with a peak of 100s on 9/17 Todd PKL.

CLARK'S GREBE
Reported 8/19 Timm Lake, Yellow Medicine Co. (1) KE *et al.* (***The Loon*** 67:252). Two birds first found in July were redis-

covered in early August at Agassiz N.W.R., Marshall Co. DBM.

American White Pelican
Reported in 16 north and 26 south counties. Late birds flew over Duluth **11/10** St. Louis DEv; peak of 1,000 birds on 10/1 Dakota DJe.

Double-crested Cormorant
Reported from 19 north and 25 south counties.

American Bittern
Reported in six north and five south counties.

Least Bittern
Only one report: 8/19 Lyon KE *et al.*

Great Blue Heron
Eighteen north reports with one late 11/12 Carlton LW; seen in 28 south counties.

Great Egret
Two birds seen 8/5 Roseau PS; total of 3 north and 25 south reports.

Snowy Egret
Two found in the summer at Pigs Eye Lake, Ramsey Co. TT, stayed through 9/4 BL.

Little Blue Heron
An immature was found 8/14–9/3 Cottonwood ED, mob.

Cattle Egret
Very scarce; three were found 8/19 Lac Qui Parle FE, one was found 10/29 Brown BBo.

Green Heron
A peak of 40 was reported 9/5 Hennepin *fide* AH; also found in 8 north and 15 south counties. Two reports of numbers being down.

Black-crowned Night-Heron
Late south 11/18 Hennepin (1) DZ.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron
No reports.

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK
Fourth acceptable state record 9/7 Roseau River W.M.A., Roseau County, PS (***The Loon*** 67:247–248).

Tundra Swan
Peak of 9,000 on 11/19 Reno Bottoms, Houston Co. KB. Seen in 10 north and 11 south counties.

[TRUMPETER SWAN]
As released Trumpeters continue to reproduce, more reports come in from southern Minnesota during their migration: 10/17 Winona (2), 10/28 Winona (4), Rice (1), Dakota (2), Wabasha (2). In northern Minnesota, a pair presumably nested near Duluth, St. Louis County (4 young) and others were refound in Becker RS, ML. Reports from nesting counties included Hennepin (20), Becker (2), Hubbard (1). Peak count 105 on 11/29 Wright ML.

Mute Swan
Reported **11/12** Cedar Lake, Rice Co. (2) JL, FKS.

Waterfowl

Greater White-fronted Goose
Reported in three north and eight south counties, plus a second earliest record **9/7** Roseau (2) PS.

Snow Goose
Reported **8/26** Kittson (1) KB, PS (summer straggler?); total of nine north and eight south county reports.

Ross' Goose
Reported 11/18 Olmsted DA *et al.*

Canada Goose
Peak of 175,000 birds seen on Lac Qui Parle Lake, Lac Qui Parle County (no date) FE; reported from 49 counties statewide.

Wood Duck
Peak number 411 on 10/4 Becker BBe *et al.*; also reported in 4 north and 25 south counties.

Harlequin Ducks, 20 November 1995, Two Harbors, Lake County. Photo by Paul Budde.

Green-winged Teal
Reported in 10 north and 16 south counties. Late report 11/19 Otter Tail SDM.

American Black Duck
Reported from 5 north and 12 south counties.

Mallard
Seen in 51 counties statewide.

Northern Pintail
Reported in 5 north and 14 south counties.

Blue-winged Teal
Peak of 1,500 on 9/23 Anoka SC; reported in 15 north and 20 south counties.

Northern Shoveler
A late report 11/1 Douglas PJ; plus 6 north and 16 south counties.

Gadwall
Reported from 6 north and 15 south counties.

American Wigeon
On 10/10 a peak of 700 was noted in Becker BBe *et al.*; additional birds reported from 8 north and 15 south counties.

Canvasback
Reports received from 15 north and 17 south counties.

Redhead
Reported from 7 north and 11 south counties.

Ring-necked Duck
Peak of 50,000 on 10/13 at Rice Lake N.W.R., Aitkin Co. CB; peak of 39,700 on 10/25 at Tamarac N.W.R., Becker Co. BBe *et al.*; also reported from 14 north and 14 south counties.

Greater Scaup
An early report on 10/16 Pennington SKS; also reported from eight north and four south counties.

Lesser Scaup
Reported from 16 north and 16 south counties.

Harlequin Duck
Reported 10/28 Hennepin TBr, 11/4–20 Lake (max. 4) mob.

Oldsquaw
Two north reports; south reports **11/4 Isanti** (1) RG, 11/11–22 Ramsey (up to 4) KB.

Black Scoter
All reports: **9/28** St. Louis mob, **10/31** Lake Byllesby, Dakota Co. (1) DBS, **11/3** Chisago (1) RG, RJ, 11/12 Aitkin MCG, 11/15 Cook mob.

Surf Scoter
All reports: 10/17 Winona RJ, CS, 11/3 Chisago RG, RJ, 11/12 Reads Landing, Wabasha Co. DA, mob, 11/19–24 Lake City, Wabasha Co. (2) JT, BL. Only north reports: 10/8 Aitkin KB, 10/13 Roseau (1 female) PS.

White-winged Scoter
All reports from north counties: 10/15 Aitkin WN, 10/29 second location Aitkin WN, 11/14 Crow Wing DBS, 10/28 Shagewa Lake, St. Louis Co. SS; three additional Lake Superior reports.

Common Goldeneye
Reported from 14 north and 15 south counties.

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE
One male 11/29 Lilydale, Ramsey Co. KB.

Bufflehead
Peak of 100s on 11/11 Beltrami DJo; peak of 500 on 11/4 Carver KB. Reported from 12 north and 17 south counties.

Hooded Merganser
Peak of **1,800**, highest reported by far from one roost, 11/4 Ramsey KB. Also reported from 13 north and 14 south counties.

Common Merganser
Peak of **70,000** birds on 11/26 at Lake Pepin, Goodhue/Wabasha counties KB; second highest total on record. Also reported from 13 north and 8 south counties.

Red-breasted Merganser
Reported from ten counties north and six south counties.

Ruddy Duck
Peak number of 600 on 10/10 Anoka KB; reported from 7 north & 18 south counties.

Vultures to Falcons

Turkey Vulture
Reported from 16 north and 18 south counties; peak south 9/12 Chisago (60) RG, 10/6 Mower (60) RRK. Hawk Ridge total 955.

Osprey
Reported from 11 north and 15 south counties. 308 counted at Hawk Ridge.

Bald Eagle
Peak of 470+ on 11/26 Lake Pepin from Lake City to Reads Landing, Wabasha Co. KB. Reported from 56 counties statewide with 1,953 flying over Hawk Ridge.

Northern Harrier
Reported from 21 north and 14 south counties; numbers sharply down at Hawk Ridge with only 450 counted (record high of 1,390 last fall).

Sharp-shinned Hawk
Reported from 16 north and 20 south counties; 17,897 counted at Hawk Ridge.

Cooper's Hawk
Reported from 13 north and 16 south counties; Hawk Ridge count 121.

Northern Goshawk
Reported from nine north and four south counties; 362 flew over Hawk Ridge.

Red-shouldered Hawk
Reported from two north and seven south counties; total of seven flew over Hawk Ridge.

Broad-winged Hawk
Reported from ten north and ten south counties; 51,048 counted at Hawk Ridge.

Swainson's Hawk
Reported from three north and five south counties; four were seen at Hawk Ridge.

Red-tailed Hawk
Peak of 250 on 10/12 Polk SKS; also reported from 24 of the 34 north counties and 30 of the 53 south counties. Hawk Ridge had 7,520.

Ferruginous Hawk
Unusual report 8/15 **Itasca** (immature) SCM (***The Loon*** 67:187).

Rough-legged Hawk
Reported from 17 north and 15 south counties; peak 50 on 10/12 Polk SKS, 30 on 11/26 Wilkin SDM. Hawk Ridge total 728.

Golden Eagle
All north reports: Cook, Lake of the Woods, Otter Tail, St. Louis, Wilkin (2–3) with an early one **9/17** Hawk Ridge, St. Louis FN. Season total 79 (record high 133 last fall) at Hawk Ridge. Additional south reports from Dakota, Goodhue, Wabasha.

American Kestrel
Reported from 6 north and 28 south counties; Hawk Ridge count 1,493.

Merlin
Reported from 15 north and 11 south counties plus 303 from Hawk Ridge.

Prairie Falcon
Only report 9/28 through November at the Minneapolis Airport, Hennepin Co. ABo, mob.

Peregrine Falcon
Reported from Becker (2), Beltrami, Carlton, Carver (2–3), Chisago, Dakota (2), Hennepin, Otter Tail, Rice, and St. Louis counties.

Partridges to Cranes

Gray Partridge
Reported by nine observers from three north and six south counties.

Ring-necked Pheasant
Reported from 5 north and 22 south counties.

Spruce Grouse
All reports: 8/28 Lake SS, 9/7 Roseau PS, 9/17 Koochiching SD.

Ruffed Grouse
Reported from 14 north and 4 south counties. Many observers reported increased sightings from last year.

Greater Prairie-Chicken
All reports: 8/11 Clay (10) CF, 8/12 Clay DBM, 11/7 Clay (12) MN, 11/7 Cass MN, 11/26 Wilkin (150–155) SDM.

Sharp-tailed Grouse
Only reports: 10/21 and 11/4 Aitkin WN.

Wild Turkey
Reported from one north (wild?) and seven south counties.

Virginia Rail
Late north 9/7 Roseau PS, 9/24 Todd JSK. Late south 9/23 Rice FKS, JL, 9/25 Hennepin TT.

Sora
Late north 9/7 Roseau PS, 9/30 Cook OSL. Late south 9/4 Rice Co. FKS, 9/21 Anoka Co. KB.

American Coot
Reported from 15 north and 18 south counties. Late north 10/29 Aitkin WN, 10/31 Becker BK, 11/4 Aitkin TT. Late south 11/30 Scott, Hennepin and Winona mob. Peak count 8,775 on 10/10 Tamarac N.W.R., Becker Co., BBe *et al.*

Sandhill Crane
Reported from seven north and five south counties. Late north 10/21–22 Polk SKS, mob. Late south 9/24 Anoka DBS, 10/8 Ramsey RH.

Shorebirds

Black-bellied Plover
Late north 10/13 Lake of the Woods (30) PS, 10/15 Lake of the Woods KB, 10/18 St. Louis NJ. Late south 8/10 Dakota TT, 9/9 Olmsted JSt, 10/9 Lac Qui Parle ABo.

Red Knot, 2 September 1995, McCleod County. Photo by David Cahlander.

American Golden-Plover
Late north 9/22 Itasca ABo, 9/28 Lake DV, 9/29 St. Louis RJ, DBS. Late south 9/23 Dodge JSt, 10/1 Hennepin (10) TT, 10/4 Ramsey KB. Peak count 98 on 9/6 Dieter Township, Roseau County PS.

Semipalmated Plover
Late north 8/27 Clay RO, 9/9 St. Louis CM, 9/10 St. Louis TW. Late south 9/5 Le Sueur WM, 9/9 Olmsted JSt, 9/29 Carver DBS.

Killdeer
Late north 9/22 Itasca ABo, 9/27 Kittson SKS, 10/11 Pennington SKS. Late south 10/22 Martin BB, 11/2 Hennepin SC, 11/5 Le Sueur RG. Peak count 55 on 9/27 Rice FKS.

American Avocet
All reports: 8/10 Dakota (5) TT, same birds reported 8/10 Ramsey mob.

Greater Yellowlegs
Late north 8/27 Beltrami DJo, 9/3 Koochiching SCM, 10/21 St. Louis JSt. Late south 10/21 Brown JSp, 10/22 Dakota (2) TT, 10/27 Blue Earth (6) RJ.

Lesser Yellowlegs
Late north 8/27 Clay RO, 9/6 Cass SCM, 10/23 Marshall SKS. Late south 10/22 Rice JL, 10/27 Blue Earth (1) RJ and Chippewa ABo.

Solitary Sandpiper
Late north 9/4 Aitkin WN, 9/28 Carlton RJ, 10/1 Lake DV. Late south 9/21 Brown JSp, 9/23 Olmsted JSt, **10/24** Hennepin SC.

Willet
Only report 8/26 Carver (1) *fide* AH.

Spotted Sandpiper
Late north 9/4 Aitkin WN, 9/24 Beltrami DJo, 10/7 St. Louis DV. Late south 9/5 Le Sueur WM, 9/10 Brown JSp, 9/25 Freeborn DJe.

Whimbrel
Only report: 8/22 St. Louis DBe.

Hudsonian Godwit
Only reports: 9/15–16 St. Louis (1) mob.

Marbled Godwit
No reports.

Ruddy Turnstone
No reports.

Red Knot
All reports: 9/2–4 McLeod (1) mob, 9/16 St. Louis (1) mob, 9/23 Roseau (1) PS.

Sanderling
Late north 10/1 St. Louis TT, 10/15 Lake of the Woods KB, **11/4–8** (second latest north) Cook mob. Late south 9/4 Washington TEB, 9/15 Ramsey KB, 10/18 Blue Earth (1) RJ.

Semipalmated Sandpiper
Late north 8/6 Lake DV, 8/7 St. Louis TW, 8/19 Lake DV. Late south 9/4 Carver DBS and McLeod DBM, 9/5 Le Sueur WM. Peak number >100 on 8/6 McLeod TT.

Least Sandpiper
Late north 9/4 Aitkin WN, 9/24 Beltrami DJo, 10/23 Pennington SKS. Late south 9/10 Winona CS, 10/14 McLeod (2) mob, 10/22 McLeod KB.

White-rumped Sandpiper
Seen 8/13 Rice FKS, 9/4 Washington TEB.

Baird's Sandpiper
Late north 9/16 St. Louis KB, 9/28 Pine RJ, 9/30 St. Louis WM. Late south 9/4 Washington TEB, 10/7 Hennepin WM, 10/14 McLeod (4) mob.

Pectoral Sandpiper
Late north 10/15 Lake of the Woods KB, 10/23 Pennington SKS, 10/28 Lake mob. Late south 10/7 Chippewa ABo, 10/22 Dakota (2) TT, 10/27 Blue Earth RJ.

Dunlin
Late north 9/16 St. Louis WM, 9/28 St. Louis KB, 10/24 Cook KMH. Late south 10/14 McLeod TT, 10/27 Blue Earth (5) RJ, 11/4 McLeod KB. Fewer reports than usual.

Stilt Sandpiper
Late north 8/22 Otter Tail RJ and Lake of the Woods PS, 9/3 Otter Tail RJ. Late south 9/4 Washington TEB, 9/5 Le Sueur WM, 9/24 Big Stone KB. Peak counts 150 on 8/13 Heron Lake, Jackson Co. KB, 50 on 9/2 Carver RG.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper
All reports north 8/5 Clay (2) CF, 8/19 Clearwater SKS, 8/21 St. Louis (12) TD, 8/28 Beltrami (2) DJo. Reports south from Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Ramsey. Total number statewide estimated at least 40.

Short-billed Dowitcher
No north reports. Late south 8/13 Jackson KB, 8/14 Winona CS, 8/25 Renville RJ.

Long-billed Dowitcher
Late north 9/23 St. Louis PBu, 9/27 Douglas RG, RJ, 9/28 St. Louis KB. Late south 9/23 Rice FKS, 10/7 Chippewa ABo, 10/18 Brown BB.

Common Snipe
Late north 10/10 Clay MN, 10/16 Marshall SKS, 11/5 Cook PBu. Late south 10/31 Lac Qui Parle ABo, 11/12 Anoka KB and Winona CS.

American Woodcock
Late north 10/14 Beltrami SCM, 10/22 Carlton LW, and 10/24 Kanabec CM. Late south 11/3 Anoka DS, Rice TB and Washington County TT.

Wilson's Phalarope
Only north report 8/12 Pennington DBM. Late south 8/25 Renville RJ and Winona CS, 8/27 Carver DBM.

Red-necked Phalarope
Late north 9/2 Otter Tail DS, 9/17 Wilkin KB, **9/22** Douglas (4) RG, RJ. Late south 9/3–4 Carver DBM, 9/5 Le Sueur WM, 9/24 Big Stone KB. Peak number 8/26 Lac Qui Parle (39) DN.

Jaegers to Terns

Parasitic Jaeger
All reports: 9/23 St. Louis (2 adult light-

Lesser Black-backed Gull, 1 October 1995, Black Dog Lake, Dakota County. Photo by David Cahlander.

morphs) BL, 10/2 St. Louis (1) MH, 10/14 St. Louis (1) JHe.

jaeger sp?
Reported 9/6 Lakewood Pumping Station, St. Louis County (possible Long-tailed) KE, 10/4 St. Louis (2, probable Parasitics) MH.

Franklin's Gull
Late north 10/10 Clay MN, 10/11 and 10/21 Douglas DN. Late south 11/2 Hennepin KB, 11/4 McLeod KB, 11/5–6 Martin BB, RJ.

Little Gull
Only report: **11/4–14** Mille Lacs Lake, Crow Wing County and Aitkin County BL, TT, mob.

Bonaparte's Gull
Late north 10/16 Cass SCM, Koochiching County (100) KB and Marshall County SKS. Late south 10/15 Dakota County JSt, 10/16 Blue Earth County LF, 10/25 Hennepin County PBu.

Ring-billed Gull
Reported from 16 in the north and 11 counties in the south.

Herring Gull
Reported from 11 north and 11 south counties.

Thayer's Gull
A total of 16 reports. Early north 10/14 Cook County mob, 10/21 Lake Jst and St. Louis KE. Early south **10/5** Dakota (adult) KB, **10/7** Dakota (first-winter) PBu, DBM; peak 10/21 Hennepin (5 adults) KB. Late north 11/21 St. Louis PBu, 11/30 Cook *fide* KE. Late south 11/18 Anoka and Isanti KB, 11/26 Wabasha (2 adults and 3 immatures) KB. Adults generally arrived earlier than did immatures KB.

ICELAND GULL
Reported 11/26 Lake City, Wabasha (adult) KB, 11/29 Black Dog Lake, Dakota (first-winter) KB.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL
Three different birds reported: 10/12–11/14 Black Dog Lake, Dakota County (third-winter) KB, mob (also seen 10/21 on Lake Calhoun, Hennepin County SC); 10/19–early December Black Dog Lake, Dakota County and Lake Calhoun, Hennepin County (adult) KB, SC, mob; 11/3–15 Black Dog Lake, Dakota County and Lake Calhoun, Hennepin County (fourth-winter) KB, SC, mob.

GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULL
First state record 10/19–11/14 (rediscovered in December) Burnsville landfill, Dakota County and Lakes Calhoun and Harriet, Hennepin County (adult) KB, mob (***The Loon*** 68:3–13).

Glaucous Gull
Early north 10/28 Cook KE. Early south **11/8** Hennepin PBu, **11/9** and **11/15** Dakota (second-winter) KB. These are the earliest south dates on record. Unusual reports 11/23–24 White Bear Lake, Ramsey and Washington Coounty (first-win-

Sabine's Gull, 5 October 1995, Park Point, Duluth, St. Louis County. Photo by Peder Svingen.

ter) KB, BL, 11/26 Lake City, Wabasha County KB.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL
Three birds, all in first-winter plumage: 11/11–12 Duluth, St. Louis County *fide* KE, PS (***The Loon*** 68:69); 11/22 Black Dog Lake, Dakota County DBM; 11/25 Grand Marais, Cook County PS *et al.* (***The Loon*** 68:68–69).

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE
Reported **9/16** St. Louis (first-winter) AH (***The Loon*** 68:131); picked up 11/12 near Orwell W.M.A., **Otter Tail** (first-winter) *fide* GO, SDM (***The Loon*** 68:71).

SABINE'S GULL
All reports: 9/6 Agassiz N.W.R., Marshall County PS, SB (***The Loon*** 67:246–247); 9/16 Warroad lagoons, Roseau PS (***The Loon*** 67:251); 10/5–6 Park Point, St. Louis County MH *et al.* All three birds were juveniles.

Caspian Tern
Late north 9/27 Aitkin CMG, 9/30 St. Louis TT, **11/5** (40) and **11/8** (10) Mille Lacs Lake (county?) WL. Late south 9/26 Washington WL, 10/7 Dakota mob, 10/12 Dakota KB.

Common Tern
Late north 9/4 Aitkin County CMG, 9/17 St. Louis County TW, 9/28 St. Louis KB, DBe. Only report south 8/28 Washington County WL.

Forster's Tern
Late north 9/7 Marshall SKS, **10/8** Beltrami DJo, **10/13** Lake of the Woods (1) PS. Late south 8/29 Nobles RJ, 9/5 Winona CS, 10/1 Hennepin TT.

Black Tern
Late north 8/11 Beltrami County DJo, 8/18 Morrison ABo, 8/26 Lake of the Woods County KB. Late south 8/26 Big Stone and Lac Qui Parle counties DN, 9/26 Houston County EMF.

Doves to Kingfishers

Rock Dove
Reported from 16 north and 21 south counties.

Mourning Dove
Reported from 18 north and 25 south counties.

Black-billed Cuckoo
Late north 8/19 Beltrami SCM, 8/21 Pennington SKS, 8/27 Marshall KB. Late south 9/1 Hennepin SC, 9/8 Winona JL, 9/10 Carver DBM.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo
All north reports: 8/5 Beltrami PS, 8/27 Aitkin CB. Late south 8/21 Anoka DJe, 9/4 Goodhue BL, 9/13 Brown JSp, (no date) Kandiyohi RF.

Eastern Screech-Owl
Reported from Cottonwood, Faribault, Freeborn, Hennepin, Lac Qui Parle, Mille Lacs, Murray, Rice, Wabasha and Winona counties.

Great Horned Owl
Reported from 14 north and 12 south

counties.

Snowy Owl
All reports: 11/8 St. Louis (dead) *fide* KE, 11/12 Aitkin BL, PS, 11/13 Pope *fide* AH, 11/13 Port Terminal, Duluth *fide* AH, 11/20 Park Point, Duluth DBM, 11/21 Becker BBe *et al.*, 11/26 Wilkin SDM.

Northern Hawk Owl
A total of eight different birds reported from Carlton, Cook, Lake, St. Louis and **Hennepin**. Earliest north 10/31 St. Louis PKL. Exceptional report 11/17 Baker Park Preserve, Hennepin Co. DCo.

Barred Owl
Reported from nine north and eight south counties.

Great Gray Owl
All reports: 8/26–November Sax-Zim bog, St. Louis Co. (6) mob, 10/21–11/18 Lake (3) mob, Beltrami *fide* DJo, 11/5 Lake of the Woods MK, 11/10 St. Louis MH, 11/11 Hwy 200, Aitkin Co. PS, 11/14 St. Louis (2) *fide* KE, 11/25 Co. Rd. 10, Aitkin Co. WN.

Long-eared Owl
All reports: 11/6 Dakota SD, 11/20 Clearwater MN, 11/29 Redwood RJ.

Short-eared Owl
All reports: 10/7 Hennepin PJ, 10/12 St. Louis FN, 10/28 Douglas DN, 10/31 Hennepin JHa, 11/10 Lake of the Woods MK, 11/11 Blue Earth BBo, 11/15 Big Stone JSc, 11/25 Dakota TT, 11/26 Wilkin (2) SDM.

Boreal Owl
All reports: 10/16 Lake (dead) BY, late October St. Louis (3 banded at H.R.N.R.) DEv *fide* KE.

Northern Saw-whet Owl
Record number reported and earlier peak than normal at H.R.N.R.; season total of at least **1,430**; also reported from Beltrami, Cook, Otter Tail, Todd, Hennepin and Rice.

Common Nighthawk
Late north 8/31 Carlton LW, 9/4 Aitkin WN, 9/24 Otter Tail SDM. Late south 10/2 Rice JL, 10/9 Martin BBo, 10/10 Houston EMF.

Whip-poor-will
All north reports: 8/5 Marshall PS, 8/9 Cass MN, 8/26 Pennington SKS. Also reported 8/10–14 Houston EMF, (no date) Winona CS.

Chimney Swift
Late north 9/16 Lake DV, **9/25** Becker BBe *et al.*, **10/16** St. Louis (1) KE. Late south 9/25 Dakota TT, 9/29 Ramsey KB, 10/8 Hennepin SC,TT.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Late north 9/19 Aitkin CMG, 9/25 Becker BK, 9/29 Cook KMH. Late south 10/1 Martin BBo, 10/3 Houston EMF, 10/4 Hennepin DBM.

Belted Kingfisher
Late north 10/22 Clay RO, 10/28 Aitkin CMG, 11/18 St. Louis DBe; reported from 25 south counties.

Woodpeckers to Flycatchers

Red-headed Woodpecker
Reported from two north and twenty south counties.

Red-bellied Woodpecker
Reported from 10 north and 22 south counties; unusual reports from Cook KE *et al.*, **Lake of the Woods** KB, PS, **Pennington** JJ, SKS.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Late north 10/9 Aitkin CB, 10/14 Lake DV, 10/18 Cook KMH. Late south 10/10 Brown JSp and Winona CS, 11/24 Nicollet LF.

Downy Woodpecker
Reported from 20 north and 26 south counties.

Hairy Woodpecker
Reported from 18 north and 23 south counties.

Three-toed Woodpecker
All reports: 11/24 Lake (2) MH, 10/29 St. Louis FN *et al.*

Black-backed Woodpecker
Reported from Clearwater, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, Pine and St. Louis counties.

Northern Flicker
Reported from 22 north and 19 south counties.

Pileated Woodpecker
Reported from 20 north and 19 south counties.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
Early south 8/17 Isanti RJ, 8/22 Watonwan DBr and Chisago RJ. Late north 8/23 Aitkin MG, 8/26 Lake of the Woods KB, 9/2 Aitkin WN. Late south 9/9 Hennepin TT, 9/14 Winona CS.

Acadian Flycatcher
All reports: 8/1 Winona CS, 8/2 Goodhue KB, 8/22 Winona CS, **8/27** (ties third latest; calling) Hennepin SC, **9/2** (ties latest date on record; calling) and Hennepin OJ.

Alder Flycatcher
All reports: 8/4 Beltrami DJo, 8/4 St. Louis TW, 8/12 Aitkin MG, 8/13 Brown JSp, 9/2 Aitkin WN, **9/6** (ties fourth latest south) Lincoln RJ, **9/7** (fifth latest north; calling) Roseau PS.

Willow Flycatcher
Reported 8/1 Winona CS, 8/2 Houston EMF, 8/3 (calling) Ramsey KB, 8/5 Dakota (3) TT, 8/12 Hennepin SC, 8/25 Washington TEB, 9/20 Houston EMF. Total of 15 records from 8/1 to 9/20. **Note**: In order to advance our knowledge, future reports of *Empidonax* flycatchers not identified by voice (call notes or calling) will not be published. Please indicate on your Seasonal Report Forms how the bird was identified and documented.

Least Flycatcher
Total of 42 records from 8/3 to 10/6. Late north 9/20 Kanabec CM, 9/22 Lake DV, **10/6** (ties third latest north) Cook KMH. Late south 9/25 Anoka KB, 9/29 Winona CS, 10/1 Brown JSp.

Eastern Phoebe
Late north 10/5 Todd JSK and Pennington SKS, 10/7 Aitkin WN, **10/22** (third latest north) Cook KMH. Late south 10/15 Carver DBM, 10/17 Houston EMF, 10/22 Hennepin SC.

Great Crested Flycatcher
Late north 9/3 St. Louis TW, 9/11 Cook KMH, 9/14 Kanabec CM. Late south 9/13 Winona CS, 9/24 Carver DBM, 10/1 Mower RRK.

Western Kingbird
Reported from 13 counties (9 l.y.). Late north 9/2 St. Louis AH, 9/3 St. Louis FN, 9/16 Clay CF. Late south 8/18 Sherburne ABo and Washington JF, 8/26 Big Stone (4) DN. Nested (2 adults & 1 young) Washington JF.

Eastern Kingbird
Late north 9/4 Aitkin WN and Beltrami DJo, **10/11** (fifth latest north) Becker MN, DJo. Late south 9/15 Watonwan RJ, 9/23 Blue Earth MF, **10/22** (ties second latest date on record and surpasses previous latest south by seven days) Ramsey DJe.

Larks to Ravens

Horned Lark
Late north 11/3 Cook KMH, 11/5 Todd JSK. Late south 11/19 Hennepin TT, 11/26 Jackson RJ.

Purple Martin
Late north 8/28 Clay MN, 9/4 Aitkin WN, 9/8 Kanabec CM. Late south 9/3 Washington DN, 9/4 Goodhue RO, 9/5 Washington DN. MN reports at least **5,000** in Clay on 8/10.

Tree Swallow
Late north 9/22 Clay MN, 9/24 Aitkin CB, 9/30 Pine WM. Late south 10/11 Winona CS, 10/14 Olmsted JSt, 10/17 Winona RJ.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Late north 9/3 Aitkin MG, **10/8** (third latest north) Otter Tail SDM. Late south 9/8 Hennepin TT, 10/6 Hennepin PBu.

Bank Swallow
Late north 9/4 Aitkin WN. Late south 9/3 Carver DSm, 9/4 Pipestone JP, 9/24 Goodhue KB.

Cliff Swallow
Late north 9/3 Aitkin CB, 9/4 Aitkin WN and Clay RO. Late south 9/24 Carver DBM, 9/25 Hennepin TT, **10/1** (fifth latest south) Dakota TT.

Barn Swallow
Late north 9/21 Clearwater WL. Late south 10/12 Winona CS, 10/14 McLeod TT, **10/25** (fifth latest south) Chisago RG.

Gray Jay
Reported from eleven north counties all within known range.

Blue Jay
Reported throughout the state.

Black-billed Magpie
Reported only from northern counties: Aitkin, Clearwater, Itasca, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Marshall, Polk, Red Lake, Roseau, St. Louis and Wilkin.

American Crow
Reported throughout the state.

Common Raven
Reported from four counties south: (no date) Anoka (4) JH, 9/12 Chisago RG, 10/16 Washington RG, 11/22 Ramsey KB. All north reports within known range.

Chickadees to Gnatcatchers

Black-capped Chickadee
Reported throughout the state. Some observers reported increased numbers in the northeast and southeast.

Boreal Chickadee
Only south report (no date) Washington *fide* AH. Reported from Aitkin, Cook, Lake, and St. Louis.

Tufted Titmouse
Three reports: Houston EMF, Goodhue KS, 9/6 Winona CS.

Red-breasted Nuthatch
Reported from 25 north (15 l.y.) and 26 south (10 l.y.) counties. Observers reported good numbers in the south and low numbers in the northeast.

White-breasted Nuthatch
Reported throughout the state.

Brown Creeper
Late north 11/17 Pennington SKS, **11/26** (fifth latest north) Becker BBe, Carlton LW.

Carolina Wren
All reports: 10/31–11/16 St. Louis PSM, 8/6 and Kandiyohi RE (***The Loon*** 67:186–187).

House Wren
Late north 10/8 Koochiching, 10/10 Todd JSK, 10/12 Clay CF. Late south 10/11 Brown JSp, 10/15 Hennepin TT, 10/22 Hennepin SC.

Winter Wren
Early south **9/1** (third earliest south) Ramsey RH, 9/9 Winona AM. Late north 10/14 Carlton LW, 10/21 St. Louis JSt, 10/28 Cook SOL. Late south 10/25 Winona CS, 11/10 Hennepin RB.

Sedge Wren
Late north 9/24 Todd JSK, 10/10 Clay MN, **10/22** (third latest north) St. Louis JBe. Late south 10/17 Rice (3) JL, 10/23 Brown JSp, **10/31** (fifth latest south) Hennepin SC.

Marsh Wren
Late north 9/10 Lake RG, 9/30 Polk SKS, 10/11 Douglas DN. Late south 10/12 Hennepin KB, 10/31 Hennepin SC, **11/19** (fourth latest date on record) Hennepin TT.

Golden-crowned Kinglet
Early south 9/17 Hennepin SC, 9/19 Hennepin KB. Late north 11/11 Mille Lacs CB, 11/16 St. Louis SW/MS. Late south 11/19 Wabasha DZ, 11/27 Washington WL.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Early south 9/1 Hennepin SC, 9/8 Winona CS. Late north 10/26 Cook KMH, 10/26 Lake DV. Late south 11/4 Hennepin SC, 11/30 Rice TB.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Reported from five north counties (same as l.y.). Late north 8/26 Hubbard CF, 9/6 Kanabec CM, 9/17 Clay CF. Late south 9/16 Anoka KB, 9/25 Houston EMF, **10/7** (fourth latest on record) Hennepin SC, JDa.

Wheatears to Thrashers

NORTHERN WHEATEAR
Reported 9/27–10/2 at 40th Ave. W. in Duluth, St. Louis Co., JH, mob (***The Loon*** 67:189–191). **Note**: The only other record for this species was also on 9/27 in Ramsey County in 1982.

Eastern Bluebird
Late north 10/25 St. Louis LW, 10/26 Lake DV, 10/28 Cook KMH. Late south 11/13–14 Houston EMF, 11/30 Winona CS.

Mountain Bluebird
All reports: **11/6–8** (ties fourth latest on record and surpasses previous late south by three days) Dakota (pair) JBu, AH, 10/15 Clay (1 female) CF.

Townsend's Solitaire
All reports: total of eight birds from Cook, Lake, & St. Louis between 9/21–11/4. Reported **9/21** (third earliest date on record) Lake DV, **9/23** (fifth earliest on record) Hoyt Lakes, St. Louis AE, 10/14–21 Grand Marais, Cook (max. 2) mob, 10/15 Agate Bay, Lake DV, 10/21 Knife River, Lake PE *et al.*, 10/21 Croftville, Cook PE *et al.*, 11/4 Tofte, Cook mob.

Veery
Late north 9/14 Carlton LW, 9/24 Crow Wing DS, **10/4** (third latest north) Todd JSK. Late south 9/9 Anoka KB, Hennepin TT, 9/10 Winona CS.

Gray-cheeked Thrush
Early north 9/4 Lake DV, 9/9 St. Louis TW. Early south 9/7 Brown JSp, 9/9 Hennepin TT. Late north 9/17 St. Louis WM, 10/3 Carlton LW. Late south 9/12 Brown JSp, 9/27 Mower RRK.

Swainson's Thrush
Early south 8/24 Hennepin TT, 8/25 Anoka KB. Late north 10/16 Lake DV, **10/29** (ties second latest north date) Roseau PS. Late south 10/9 Hennepin DBo, 10/31 Winona CS. Observers in north-central and northeast regions reported increased numbers.

Hermit Thrush
Early south 9/15 Brown JSp, 9/20 Hennepin SC. Late north 10/28 Carlton LW, 11/12 St. Louis PS. Late south 11/1 Hennepin SC, 11/16 Houston EMF.

Wood Thrush
Late north 9/7 Cook KMH, 9/9 Carlton LW. Late south 10/1 Hennepin SC, **10/9** (ties fourth latest south) Hennepin KB.

American Robin
Reported throughout the state.

Varied Thrush
Total of thirteen birds including five south reports. All reports: **10/26–27** Fairmont, Martin Co. EB, mob., 11/3 Stearns *fide* AH, 11/4–24 North Township, Pennington Co. (female) SKS, 11/6 Washington *fide* AH, 11/7–19 Gun Lake, Aitkin Co. WN, 11/11 Duluth, St. Louis Co. MH, 11/11–23 Lake Edward, Crow Wing Co. FDU, *fide* PP, 11/12 Tower, St. Louis Co. JGa, 11/17–18 Rice OR, FKS, JL, 11/18 Palisade, Aitkin Co. WN, 11/19 Scott PW, 11/22–23 near Isle, Aitkin Co. WN, 11/21–12/3 Cross Lake, Crow Wing Co. CW, *fide* PP.

Gray Catbird
Late north 10/28 Cook WM, 10/31 Lake

DV, 10/31 Cook KMH. Late south 10/28 Winona CS, 10/28 Hennepin JBe, **11/23** (fifth latest south) Ramsey DBe.

Brown Thrasher
Late north 10/28 St. Louis WM, 11/26 St. Louis DBe, 11/30 Lake DV. Late south 10/9 Hennepin KB, 10/21 Hennepin SC, 11/19 Martin BBo.

Pipits to Vireos

American Pipit
Early north 9/16 Lake DV and St. Louis WM. Early south **9/15** (fourth earliest south) Ramsey KB, 9/22 Chisago (6) RG. Peak 40+ on 9/28 in Carlton RJ. Late north 11/3 Cook KMH, 11/4 Lake KE. Late south 10/22 Dakota (2) TT, 11/5 Anoka KB.

Bohemian Waxwing
Early north **9/23** (fourth earliest on record) Cook KMH, 10/22 Lake DV, 10/24 St. Louis mob. Only south report 11/11 Dakota TT.

Cedar Waxwing
Reported throughout the state. Peak 1,056 on 9/12 Lakewood Pumping Station, St. Louis Co. *fide* KE.

Northern Shrike
Early north 10/7 St. Louis SS, 10/8 Cook KMH, 10/13 Roseau PS. Early south 10/14 Sherburne TT, 10/17 Ramsey KB, 10/21 Hennepin TT.

Loggerhead Shrike
Reported from four south counties (3 l.y.). Late south 8/19 Lincoln (1) KE, 8/27 Washington (max. 3) TEB, JF, 8/27 Dakota TT. Also reported 8/9 Scott RG.

European Starling
Reported throughout the state.

Bell's Vireo
No reports.

Solitary Vireo
Early south **8/2** (ties third earliest date south) Houston EMF, 8/27 Hennepin mob. Late north 10/5 Cook KMH, 10/10 Lake DV. Late south 10/11 Brown JSp, **11/1** (ties third latest on record) Hennepin SC.

Yellow-throated Vireo
Late north 9/8 Kanabec CM, 9/9 Carlton LW, **9/20** Kanabec CM. Late south 9/20 Houston EMF, 9/22 Goodhue KB, 9/28 Houston EMF.

Warbling Vireo
Late north 9/2 Beltrami DJo and Aitkin WN, 9/3 Kanabec CM. Late south 9/26 Brown JSp, 9/27 Hennepin DBo, **9/29** (fifth latest south) Winona CS.

Philadelphia Vireo
Early south 8/25 Anoka KB, 8/31 Hennepin SC. Late north 9/26 Kanabec CM, 9/26 Cook KMH. Late south 10/2 Hennepin SC, 10/4 Waseca RJ.

Red-eyed Vireo
Late north 9/15 Cook KMH, 9/16 Lake DV, 9/17 Aitkin MG. Late south 10/1 Sherburne WM, 10/5 Brown JSp, 10/7 Hennepin SC.

Warblers

Blue-winged Warbler
No north reports. Late south 9/2 Hennepin SC, 9/3 Winona CS, 9/9 Wabasha RJ. Also reported 8/17 **Isanti** RJ.

Golden-winged Warbler
Late north 9/4 Aitkin WN, 9/8 Kanabec CM, **9/12** (ties fifth latest north) Becker (2) BBe. Late south 9/12 Chisago RG, 9/14 Hennepin TT, **9/26** (fifth latest on record) Hennepin KB.

Tennessee Warbler
Early south 8/3 Winona CS, 8/5 Dakota TT. Late north 9/30 Pine WM, 10/4 Todd JSK, 10/14 St. Louis WM. Late south 10/14 Scott WM, 10/17 Houston EMF, 10/21 Winona CS.

Orange-crowned Warbler
Early north **8/12** (ties fifth earliest north)

Mille Lacs MF, 8/24 Aitkin MG. Early south 8/29 Brown JSp and Murray ND. Late north 10/7 Carlton LW, 10/13 Otter Tail SDM. Late south 10/28 Hennepin JBe, CF, 11/1 Hennepin SC.

Nashville Warbler
Early south 8/15 Houston EMF, 8/19 Hennepin SC. Late north 10/12 Todd JSK, 10/13 St. Louis LF, 10/14 Lake DV. Late south 10/21 Hennepin DZ, 10/22 Hennepin SC, **10/28** (fifth latest south) Hennepin JBe, CF.

Northern Parula
Early south 8/19 Hennepin SC, 8/22 Winona CS. Late north 9/11 St. Louis AE, 9/14 Carlton LW, 9/15 Cook KMH. Late south 9/26 Ramsey KB, 10/1 Hennepin SC, 10/7 Hennepin DSm.

Yellow Warbler
Late north 9/5 Koochiching GM and Aitkin MG, 9/7 Cook SOL. Late south 9/10 Dakota TT, 9/24 Hennepin SC, 9/30 Pipestone JP.

Chestnut-sided Warbler
Early south 8/19 Hennepin PBu, TT. Late north 9/20 Kanabec CM, 9/27 Aitkin CB, **10/7** (latest north date on record) Carlton LW. Late south 9/30 Anoka KB, 10/1 Hennepin SC, 10/7 Martin BBo.

Magnolia Warbler
Early south 8/19 Hennepin SC, 8/22 Winona ASM. Late north 9/20 Becker BK, 9/26 Cook KMH, **10/8** (fourth latest north) Lake DV. Late south 10/10 Brown JSp and Hennepin SC, **10/28** (third latest on record) Hennepin JBe, CF.

Cape May Warbler
Early south 8/26 Anoka JH, Dakota TT. Late north 10/22 Cook KE, 10/28 Cook KE, mob, **11/4** (fourth latest on record) Lake KE. Late south **11/3** (fifth latest on record) Stearns DH, **11/5** (third latest on record) Hennepin (partial albino) AH, PS.

Black-throated Blue Warbler
Reported from ten counties (11 l.y.). Early south 9/4 Olmsted JSt, 9/9 Anoka KB. Late north 8/28 Aitkin MG, 9/2 Aitkin WN, 9/3 Aitkin MG. Late south 9/10 Winona CS, 10/3 Hennepin *fide* AH, **10/28** (fourth latest on record) Hennepin JBe, CF. SC reports six individuals in Hennepin between 9/12–29.

Yellow-rumped Warbler
Early south 8/20 Washington DS and Sherburne WM, 8/24 Hennepin TT. Late north 10/24 Cook KMH, 10/29 Cook WM, 11/15 Lake DV. Late south 11/5 Hennepin (3) SC, 11/15 Hennepin SC, 11/19 Houston KB.

Black-throated Green Warbler
Early south 8/23 Hennepin PBu, 8/25 Hennepin SC. Late north 9/17 Lake DV and St. Louis MB, **10/3** (ties fifth latest north) Cook KMH. Late south 9/23 Olmsted JSt, 9/30 Anoka KB, 10/9 Hennepin SC.

Blackburnian Warbler
Early south 8/19 Hennepin DBo, TT, 8/23 Rice TB. Late north 9/7 Marshall SKS, 9/20 Kanabec CM. Late south 9/16 Ramsey KB, 9/21 Houston EMF, 9/30 Hennepin SC.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER
Only report: 8/5 Kandiyohi (Sibley S.P.) SC.

Pine Warbler
Late north 9/14 Crow Wing (3) DS, 9/16 St. Louis CS, 10/7 Carlton LW. Late south 9/6 Houston EMF, 9/7 Goodhue DSm, 9/12 Houston EMF.

Palm Warbler
Early south 8/27 Dakota TT, 8/28 Anoka KB. Late north 10/13 St. Louis LF, 10/28 Cook KMH, **11/5** (fifth latest north) Lake DV. Late south 10/16 Winona CS, 10/27 Anoka KB.

Bay-breasted Warbler
Early south 8/23 Hennepin DBo, 8/25 Anoka KB. Late north 9/19 Pennington SKS, 9/30 Pine WM, 10/7 Carlton LW. Late south 10/1 Hennepin SC, 10/9 Hennepin TT.

Blackpoll Warbler
Early north 8/25 Pennington SKS, 9/2 Lake DV. Early south 8/27 Brown JSp and Anoka JH. Late north 9/17 St. Louis MB, **10/15** (fourth latest north) Lake DV. Late south 9/26 Brown JSp, 10/1 Hennepin SC. DV reported 100+ from Lake on 9/4.

Cerulean Warbler
No reports.

Black-and-white Warbler
Late north 9/15 Cook KMH, 9/17 Itasca ABo, 10/11 Aitkin WN. Late south 10/2 Brown JSp, **10/31** Hennepin SC, **11/1** (third latest on record) Hennepin SC.

American Redstart
Late north 10/4 Aitkin MG, 10/14 Lake DV. Late south 10/9 Winona CS, 10/10 Hennepin SC.

Prothonotary Warbler
All reports: 8/2 Goodhue KB, 8/30 Winona CS.

Ovenbird
Late north 9/25 St. Louis AE, 9/26 Becker BBe, **10/8** (ties fourth latest north) Carlton. Late south 10/9 Hennepin DBo and Ramsey TT, 10/11 Hennepin (2) SC.

Northern Waterthrush
Early south 8/17 Hennepin SC, 8/19 Hennepin TT. Late north 10/5 Cook KMH, **10/7** (fourth latest north) Lake DV. Late south 10/2 Winona CS, 10/7 and Hennepin SC.

Louisiana Waterthrush
Only report: 8/13 Winona CS.

Connecticut Warbler
Early south 8/24 Winona CS, 8/29 Hennepin SC, RG. Late north 9/4 Itasca BN, 9/19 Pennington SKS. Late south 9/8 Anoka JH, 9/14 Hennepin OJ.

Mourning Warbler
Early south 8/20 Hennepin SC, 8/21 Brown JSp. Late north 8/26 Becker BBe, 8/31 Cook KMH. Late south 9/18 Anoka KB, 10/5 Brown JSp. South reports peaked between 8/28 and 9/2.

Summer Tanager, 10 November 1995, Minnesota City, Winona County. Photo by David Cahlander.

Common Yellowthroat
Late north 9/27 Cook KMH, RJ, 10/3 St. Louis DV. Late south 10/7 Goodhue BL, 10/11 Hennepin SC, 10/14 Scott WM.

Hooded Warbler
Reported **10/20** (first record in northeastern Minnesota and the latest date anywhere in the state) Grand Marais, **Cook Co**. KE (***The Loon*** 67:250–251). Late south 8/17–31 T. S. Roberts Sanctuary, Hennepin Co. SC.

Wilson's Warbler
All dated north reports 8/30 Kanabec CM, 8/31 Beltrami DJo, 9/1 St. Louis TW, 9/2 Carlton LW. Early south 8/12 Murray ND, 8/19 Hennepin DBo, PBu, SC. Late south 9/25 Ramsey TT, 10/1 Hennepin SC.

Canada Warbler
Early south 8/17 Hennepin SC, 8/20 Brown JSp, 8/22 Winona CS. Late north 9/1 Cook KMH, 9/3 Aitkin CMG, 9/16

Koochiching GM. Late south 9/12 Hennepin SC, 9/14 Winona CS, 9/15 and Ramsey KB.

Tanagers to Snow Bunting

Summer Tanager
Only report **11/9–25** (second latest south date) Winona *fide* CS.

Scarlet Tanager
Late north 9/12 Becker BBe, 9/14 St. Louis AE, 9/19 Kanabec CM. Late south 9/26 Anoka KB, 10/1 and Hennepin SC, WM.

Northern Cardinal
Reported from 6 north and 20 south counties.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Late north 10/9 Cook OSL, 10/22 St. Louis TW, 11/6 Lake DV. Late south 10/2 Houston EMF, 10/3 Dakota DBS, 10/11 Anoka KB.

Blue Grosbeak
Late south 8/20 Murray ND, 9/5 Pipestone RJ. Also reported 8/1 **Cottonwood** RG.

Indigo Bunting
Late north 8/25 Becker BBe, 9/23 Koochiching PS. Late south 9/22 Chisago RJ, 10/4 Ramsey KB, **10/18** (third latest south date) Hennepin SC.

Dickcissel
Late north 8/7 Pennington SKS, 9/2 St. Louis FN. Late south 8/13 Jackson KB, 8/21 Pipestone JP, 8/22 Brown JSp.

Eastern Towhee
Late north 10/11 Wilkin SDM, 11/4 Cook, OSL. Late south 10/11 Brown JSp, 10/16 Hennepin SC, 10/19 Houston EMF. **Note**: All reports of Spotted Towhee require documentation.

American Tree Sparrow
Early north **9/15** (third earliest north) Becker (30) BBe, 10/5 Cook KMH, 10/7 Carlton LW and St. Louis AE, SS. Early south 10/7 Hennepin SC, TT, 10/15 Rice TBo, 10/17 Dodge RJ.

Chipping Sparrow
Late north 10/1 Cass MN, 10/6 Koochiching GM, **11/28** (ties second latest north date) St. Louis NJ. Late south 11/1 Hennepin SC, 11/2 Washington WL, 11/5 Dakota TT.

Clay-colored Sparrow
Late north 9/30 Polk SKS, 10/1 Todd JSK, **10/22** Cook KE. Late south 9/11 Winona CS, 10/15 Hennepin PBu, DBM.

Field Sparrow
Late south 10/23 Mower RRK, 10/24 Dakota CS, 11/19 Hennepin JBe.

Vesper Sparrow
Late north 10/13 St. Louis County KE, 10/14 Wilkin County DBS. Late south 10/20 Watonwan DBr, 10/22 Dakota TT, 10/27 Winona CS.

Lark Sparrow
Late north 8/15 Becker County BBe, **9/27** (third latest date north) Kittson SKS. Late south 8/12 Sherburne KB, 8/20 Anoka RH.

Savannah Sparrow
Late north 10/17 Todd JSK, 10/21 Lake PBu, **11/15** (latest north date) Cook DBe. Late south 10/22 McLeod KB, 10/26 Winona CS, 11/5 Hennepin TT.

Grasshopper Sparrow
Late south 8/28–9/1 Ramsey KB, **10/7** (latest south date) Freeborn RJ.

Henslow's Sparrow
Only reports: **10/8** (fourth latest south date) Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co. JL, **10/11 Red Lake** SKS (***The Loon*** 68:74–75).

LeConte's Sparrow
Late north 9/17 Wilkin Co. KB, 9/27 Kittson Co. SKS. Late south 10/11 Benton RJ and Wright RJ, 10/13 Ramsey RJ, 10/22 Brown JSp.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow
All reports: 8/11 Norman DBM, 9/21–24 Anoka (6) KB, mob (***The Loon*** 67:249–250), 9/30 Clay CF.

Fox Sparrow
Early north 9/14 Cook KMH, 9/17 Itasca ABo. Early south 9/17 Hennepin SC, 9/21 Anoka KB. Late north 11/11 St. Louis TW, 11/15 Cook OSL. Late south 11/16 Rice TBo, 11/24 Hennepin SC.

Song Sparrow
Late north 11/5 Pennington SKS, 11/6 Lake DV, 11/11 Mille Lacs CB, JSt.

Lincoln's Sparrow
Early south 9/8 Hennepin KB, SC, 9/14 Ramsey TT and Winona CS. Late north 10/11 Pennington SKS, 10/13 St. Louis LW, 10/29 Lake DV. Late south 10/27 Washington TEB, 11/1 Ramsey KB, 11/4 Isanti RG.

Swamp Sparrow
Late north 10/29 Lake DV, **11/25** (second latest north date) Carlton LW. Late south 10/30 Rice JL and Winona CS, 11/19 Hennepin TT. Migration apparently peaked in the Twin Cities area around 9/21–22, when RJ found them abundant in Chisago and KB counted 80 in Anoka.

White-throated Sparrow
Early south 8/31 Hennepin *fide* AH, 9/3 Anoka KB and Winona JL, CS. Late north 11/26 St. Louis NJ, 11/30 Aitkin CMG. Late south 11/30 Hennepin DZ and Houston EMF, Ramsey KB. Peak migration 9/21–27 Cass MN and 9/26 Anoka when KB observed hundreds of individuals.

White-crowned Sparrow
Early north **9/1** (earliest north date) Cook OSL, **9/6** Koochiching GM and Roseau PS, **9/8** Lake of the Woods PS. Early south 9/18 Anoka KB, 9/22 Chisago RJ. Late north 11/13 St. Louis NJ, 11/24 Becker BBe. Late south 10/28 Winona CS, 11/12 Hennepin OJ.

Harris' Sparrow
Early north 9/19 Koochiching GM, 9/20 Aitkin CMG. Early south 9/22 Brown JSp, 9/24 Hennepin SC. Late north 11/4 Mille Lacs BL, 11/25 Becker BBe. Late south 11/5 Jackson RJ, 11/11 Hennepin TT.

Dark-eyed Junco
Early south 8/27 Hennepin SC, WM, 9/12 Chisago RG. Migration in north peaked 9/21–27 *fide* CMG and BK.

Lapland Longspur
Early north 9/16 Lake DV and St. Louis mob, 9/25 Cook KMH. Early south 9/15 Hennepin SC and Ramsey KB, 9/22 Chisago RJ. Late north 11/4 Lake DV and Pennington SKS, 11/29 Wilkin SDM.

Smith's Longspur
No reports.

Chestnut-collared Longspur
Only report 8/12 Clay DBM.

Snow Bunting
Early north 9/22 St. Louis *fide* KE, 10/6 Beltrami *fide* AH, 10/11 Cook KMH. Early south 10/17 Rice RJ, 10/18 Anoka KB, 10/29 Hennepin SC, TT.

Blackbirds

Bobolink
Late north 8/18 Wadena ABo, 8/27 Kittson KB, 8/28 Pennington SKS. Late south 9/25 Anoka KB, 10/1 Hennepin TT, 10/4 Waseca RJ.

Red-winged Blackbird
Late north 11/24 Aitkin CMG, 11/28 St. Louis NJ. Reported from 23 counties south.

Eastern Meadowlark
Late north 10/8 Kanabec CM, 10/8 Lake DS, 10/22 Lake DV. Reported from six counties south.

Western Meadowlark
Late north 11/18 Roseau SKS, 11/29 Wilkin SDM. Reported from 12 counties south.

Yellow-headed Blackbird
Late north 9/19 **Hawk Ridge**, St. Louis

FN. Late south 9/9 Blue Earth MF, 9/24 Rice JL. JL reported numbers low all fall. Yellow-headed Blackbirds apparently left the state much earlier than usual this year. These late dates are at least a month earlier than the average late dates, north and south, for this species.

Rusty Blackbird
Early north 9/23 Koochiching PS and St. Louis TW, 10/12 Carlton LW. Early south 10/2 Rice JL, 10/4 Anoka KB. Late north **11/29** Wilkin SDM, **11/30** Becker BK. Late south 10/28 Martin BBo, 11/6 Ramsey RH.

Brewer's Blackbird
Late north 9/27 Douglas RJ, 10/2 Itasca BN, 10/22 Polk SKS. Late south 10/8 McLeod KB, 10/27 Faribault RJ, 10/31 Chippewa ABo. These were some of the earliest "late" dates for this species in the last ten years.

Common Grackle
Late north 11/12 Kanabec CM and Pennington SKS, 11/16 Aitkin CMG and St. Louis NJ. Reported from 26 counties south.

Brown-headed Cowbird
Late north **11/5** Lutsen, Cook Co. KE. Late south 9/23 Rice JL, 10/14 Washington RJ.

Orchard Oriole
All reports: 8/5 Clay County (2) FKS, 8/12 Houston County EMF, **9/2** Olmsted County JSt, **9/8** (latest date in the state) Pipestone County JP.

Baltimore Oriole
Late north 9/17 St. Louis TW, 9/19 Aitkin CB, 9/20 Kanabec CM. Late south 9/7 Brown JSp, Nicollet LF and Washington WL, 9/15 Hennepin SC, 11/5 Winona *fide* CS.

Finches to Weaver Finches

Pine Grosbeak
Early north 10/9 Cook OSL, 10/21 St. Louis JBe, TW.

Purple Finch
Early south **8/24** (second earliest south date) Anoka KB, **8/27** Hennepin SC, WM. Recorded in 17 north counties.

House Finch
Reported from 15 counties north, 22 south. As a sign of the continued explosion in numbers of this species, KB observed **800–1000** individuals on 9/23 at Locke Park, Anoka Co.

Red Crossbill
Only south reports were 11/25 Ramsey RH, 11/26 Anoka JBe. Reported from five north counties.

White-winged Crossbill
Only south reports were 11/11–26 Anoka JBe, CF, 11/21 Carver DBM. Reported from three north counties.

Common Redpoll
Early north **10/4** (ties earliest date on record) Lake SW/MS, 10/15 Lake of the Woods KB, 10/16 St. Louis KE. Early south 10/18 Anoka KB, 10/21 Carver DBM, 10/22 Dakota DBM.

Hoary Redpoll
All reports: 11/4 Tofte, Cook Co. KE, 11/11 Whipholt, Cass Co. PS, 11/13 St. Albans Bay, Crow Wing Co. AH.

Pine Siskin
Reported from 19 north and 13 south counties.

American Goldfinch
Reported from 21 north and 29 south counties.

Evening Grosbeak
Only south reports were 10/30 Winona *fide* CS and Cottonwood ED (no date). Reported from 17 counties north.

House Sparrow
Reported from 19 north and 24 south counties.

Observers

DA	Diane Anderson
KB	Karl Bardon
SB	Sue Barton
ABa	Al Batt
JBe	Joe Beck
TEB	Tom & Elizabeth Bell
BBe	Betsy Beneke
DBe	David Benson
JBl	Jo Blanich
TBo	Tom Boevers
BBo	Brad Bolduan
ABo	Al Bolduc
DBo	Don Bolduc
TBr	Terry Brashear
RB	Richard Brasket
EB	Ed Brekke-Kramer
DBr	Diane Brudelie
PBu	Paul Budde
JBu	Jim Burt
CB	Cindy Butler
MB	Mike Butterfield
DC	Dave Cahlander
SC	Steve Carlson
DCo	Donna Compton
JDa	Jeff Dains
JD	Jeff Dankert
SD	Steve Deger
LD	Lowell Deede
ND	Nelvina DeKam
ED	Ed Duerksen
KE	Kim R. Eckert
FE	Fred Eckhardt
DE	Dudley Edmondson
VE	V. John Ella
RE	Ron Erpelding
DEv	David Evans
ME	Molly Evans
AE	Audrey Evers
BF	Bruce A. Fall
LF	Lawrence W. Filter
HJF	Herbert & Jeanette Fisher
TF	Troy Flicek
EMF	Eugene & Marilynn Ford
CF	Cole Foster
RJF	Randy & Jean Frederickson
MF	Merrill J. Frydendall
JF	J. S. Futcher
JGa	Jim Gauboy
CMG	Clare & Maurita Geerts
EG	Esther Gesick
RG	Ray Glassel
JHa	Jay Hamernick
KH	Katie Haws
MH	Mike Hendrickson
AH	Anthony Hertzel
DH	Dave Herzog
JHe	Joel Hessen
KMH	Ken & Molly Hoffman
RH	Robert E. Holtz
JH	James L. Howitz
NJ	Nancy Jackson
CJ	Coralie A. Jacobson
RJ	Robert B. Janssen
PJ	Paul Jantscher
DJe	Douglas Jenness
ALJ	Andrea & Lowell Johnson
DJo	Douglas P. Johnson
OJ	Oscar L. Johnson
JJ	Jeanne Joppru
MK	Martin Kehoe
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
Fl	Fred Lesher
ML	Madeleine Linck
BL	Bill Litkey
JL	Jon Little
WL	William H. Longley
OSL	Orvis & Sandy Lunke
CMa	Craig Mandel
WM	William Marengo
GM	Grace Marquardt
DBM	Dennis & Barbara Martin
SLM	Suzanne & Lyle Mathews
SM	Spencer Meeks
CM	Craig Menze
AM	A. Steven Midthune
SDM	Steve & Diane Millard
MCBS	Minnesota County Biological Survey
DM	Darrel Mohn
PSM	Patty & Steve Monson-Geerts
JM	John Morrison
SCM	Steve & Carol Mortensen
DN	David Neitzel
BN	Bill Nelson
WN	Warren Nelson
GN	Gary Nielsen
CN	Connie Norheim
MN	Michael R. North
MO	Mark Ochs
RO	Robert O'Connor
DO	Dan Orr
CO	Connie Osbeck
GO	Gary Otnes

JP	Johanna Pals
PP	Pam Perry
DMP	Daphne & Meyers Peterson
AMP	Anne Marie Plunkett
JPo	Jim Pomplun
KR	Kim Risen
OR	Orwin A. Rustad
JSc	John Schladweiler
SS	Steven Schon
BS	Bruce Schmidt
RRS	Rick & Robyn Schroeder
RS	Roger Schroeder
CS	Carol Schumacher
JS/MN	Jean Segerstrom & Mark Newstrom
DBS	Drew & Becky Smith
KS	Kiki Sonon
TS/JB	Thom Soule & Janet Boe
DS	Dave Sovereign
JSp	Jack Sprenger
JSt	Jeff Stephenson
SKS	Shelley & Keith Steva
FKS	Forest & Kirsten Strnad
SSt	Steve Stucker
PS	Peder Svingen
JT	Joann Trom
HT	Howard Towle
TT	Tom Tustison
FDU	Frank & Dorothy Ubel
DV	Dan Versaw
SWa	Stuart Wagenius
JW	Jesse Wallace
DW	Don Wanschura
LW	Larry Weber
SWe	Steve Weston
KKW	Kristine & Kyle Wicklund
TW	Terry Wiens
PW	Paul Wise
SW/MS	Steve Wilson & Mary Shedd
CW	C. B. Wright
MW	Mary Wyatt
DZ	Dave Zumeta
mob	many observers

Corrections to The Season:
Delete **Northern Shrike** 22 April 1995 (***The Loon*** 67:225).
Change date of **Baird's Sandpipers** from spring migrants on 15 June 1995 to fall migrants on 15 July 1995 (***The Loon*** 68:45).

Minnesota Big Days

Paul Hertzel

You don't need much to do a Big Day. All you really need is the day itself, 24 hours uninterrupted by the telephone, the grocery list, and all the other ordinarily urgent daily activities that keep you from doing a Big Day. Also it helps to read and write, since a Big Day involves conducting a census of bird species.

Statewide Big Days

Big Days are about records. The idea is to record the names of all the birds you encounter whose identities you confirm in the course of a single day. It's more than leisure, not quite sport, a little science, and a lot of work. In general, those who are proficient have studied existing ornithological and geographical records, and when successful, add to this body of information. As such, it's important to be accurate, and it's useful and fun to compare records.

For instance, the top Big Day in the state of Minnesota is a well-documented record of 192 species compiled in 1983 by Kim Eckert, Paul Egeland, Henry Kyllingstad and Terry Savaloja. Their chosen route was the result of analyzing records they helped to generate. Starting in Fergus Falls and heading north and east to Lake of the Woods, they encountered nine more species than their own 10-year-old record set using a more interior route.

Besides reading and writing, there are

plenty of other things one can do to ensure a successful Big Day, like befriending and enlisting some world-class birders, maybe from the above group. Or getting some serious financing, maybe from a wealthy sponsor. The top teams in the 1996 World Series of Birding held at Cape May in the month of May, had both, including sponsorship by such serious backers as *Birder's World* magazine, Kowa Optical, Carl Zeiss Optical, and Phillips Petroleum. First place went to the Birder's World Team of David Womer, Chris Aquila and David Dendler after recording 229 species in the state of New Jersey, a geographic area smaller than St. Louis County.

But that's extreme. A good day, a good route, and a good friend will create an adventure worth the 24-hour investment. The Eckert/Egeland/Kyllingstad group together with various friends holds most of the high state totals in adventures scattered through the 1970s and 1980s. Table 1 lists the top 16 Big Days on record.

By its odd gaps, the listing in Table 1 appears incomplete. Probably there are multiple instances of Big Day totals in the mid- to upper-160s that are missing. If you have unreported Big Day totals that would make this list, send them to the author for inclusion. An address appears at the end of this article.

County Big Days

All Big Days indirectly compete with other Big Days since the goal is to achieve a high total, and perhaps set a standard. So it was only one step for some enterprising individual to make the competition more direct. Competitive Big Days, like "The World Series of Birding", are often used to raise money for worthy causes. In Minnesota the annual Hawk Ridge Birdathon, which raises money for the Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve, attracts teams of birders who compete for the top 24-hour total within the boundaries of St. Louis County. The spirit of competition together with excellent habitat ranging from the boreal forests and bogs of Sax-Zim to the deep water and sandbars of the Duluth harbor, produce impressive totals for this county. Three of the top fifteen Big Day totals in the state of Minnesota were recorded in the restricted geographic area of St. Louis County, all during birdathons.

Such competitive Big Days really test

Table 1. Top Minnesota Big Days.

192	5/21/83	Kim Eckert, Paul Egeland, Henry Kyllingstad, Terry Savaloja
184	5/23/85	Kim Eckert, Paul Egeland, Henry Kyllingstad, Parker Backstrom
183	5/19/73	Kim Eckert, Paul Egeland, Henry Kyllingstad, Terry Savaloja
182	5/27/86	Kim Eckert, Paul Egeland, Henry Kyllingstad, Fred Lesher
181	5/18/74	Kim Eckert, Paul Egeland, Henry Kyllingstad, Terry Savaloja, Kevin Martell
181	5/23/81	Kim Eckert, Paul Egeland, Henry Kyllingstad, Steve Millard
179	5/22/76	Kim Eckert, Paul Egeland, Henry Kyllingstad, Terry Savaloja, Bob Janssen
178	5/25/84	Kim Eckert, Paul Egeland, Henry Kyllingstad, Keith Camburn
177	5/17/75	Kim Eckert, Paul Egeland, Henry Kyllingstad, Terry Savaloja
177*	5/18/96	Mike Hendrickson, Mark Ochs, Terry Brashear, Kim Risen
173	5/26/79	Kim Eckert, Paul Egeland
173*	5/18/96	Peder Svingen, Tony Hertzel, Paul Hertzel
166	5/15/71	Kim Eckert, Paul Egeland, Bob Russell
162**	5/27/95	Peder Svingen
161*	5/18/96	Don Kienholz, Dave Gilbertson, Bill Marengo, Peter Neubeck
160**	5/21/94	Peder Svingen

* St. Louis County only
** Roseau County only

one's endurance, knowledge and determination, and usually favor teams made up of people most familiar with the local geographic and ornithological peculiarities. Some birdathons have a separate medal category for "out of region" teams because it's so difficult to succeed at the level of local teams who know the area and its usage intimately.

This advantage in knowledge of local facts has given rise to the County Big Day. There can be only one record statewide Big Day, but in Minnesota there can be 87 record County Big Days, including your county and that county where your favorite secret birding spot still lies hidden from those you're convinced would exploit and ruin it if word ever got out. Probably few birders know Aitkin County as well as Warren Nelson, and not surprisingly, he owns the county's Big Day record at 151 species.

Because of its size and its annual hosting of the Hawk Ridge Birdathon, St. Louis County has produced many of the top County Big Days in the state. Gary Nelson and I did a casual Big Day in St. Louis County every year for many years, and were always pleased to record a total just over one hundred. But when Kim Eckert initiated the birdathon ten years ago we had to work a lot harder to maintain a certain respectability in our little tradition. Now frequent and intense birding, and a history of sharing records and Big Day lists has made this county one of the best understood in the state. Table 2 lists the top 21 county-wide Big Days (possibly omitting a few additional St. Louis County birdathon counts).

Thanks to Jerry Bonkoski, who in 1987 began preserving the county Big Day records, we have a fairly complete listing of records by county. Some entries have begun to acquire multiple count histories, but there are still many counties with no Big Day records, including a few surprises like Hennepin County. Table 3 summarizes the high counts by county. All but a handful of the records are for the month of May, but it would be interesting to know what sort of totals are obtainable for other months. In any case, if there are no Big Day records for your county, it must be time for you and your friends to establish some.

Table 2: Some Top County Big Days.

177	St. Louis	5/18/96	Mike Hendrickson, Mark Ochs, Terry Brashear, Kim Risen
173	St. Louis	5/18/96	Peder Svingen, Tony Hertzel, Paul Hertzel
162	Roseau	5/27/95	Peder Svingen
161	St. Louis	5/18/96	Don Kienholz, Dave Gilbertson, Bill Marengo, Peter Neubeck
160	Roseau	5/21/94	Peder Svingen
159	St. Louis	5/20/89	Mike Hendrickson, Kim Risen
159	St. Louis	5/18/96	Kim Eckert, Barb Akre, Mike Citsay, Connie Osbeck
158	St. Louis	5/18/96	Paul Egeland, Dave Benson, John Ellis, Mark Stensaas
156	Polk	5/19/90	Dave & Sharon Lambeth, Peder Svingen
152	Olmstead	5/13/94	Jerry Bonkoski, Bob Ekblad, Jerry Pruett, Chuck Krulas
151	Aitkin	5/15/93	Warren Nelson
150	St. Louis	5/18/96	Ben Yokel, Paul Budde, Dave Cahlander
146	Lake of the Woods	5/26/96	Peder Svingen, Tony & Ann Hertzel
144	Otter Tail	5/15/91	Steve & Diane Millard
144	Big Stone	5/18/94	Tony Hertzel, Paul Hertzel
143	Aitkin	5/26/91	Warren Nelson
142	Lyon	5/14/88	Henry Kyllingstad, Paul Egeland
141	Yellow Medicine	5/08/93	Parker Backstrom, Karl Bardon, Peder Svingen
141	Le Sueur	5/13/95	Ann & Tony Hertzel, Peder Svingen
140	Kandiyohi	5/20/95	Randy Fredickson
140	St. Louis	5/18/96	Laura Erickson, Karen Keenan, Holly Peirson, Jane Wobken

Table 3: Big Day Totals For All Minnesota Counties.

Aitkin	151	5/15/93	Warren Nelson
	143	5/26/91	Warren Nelson
Anoka	111	5/16/92	Robert Holtz, John Wallner
Becker	—		
Beltrami	113	5/19/90	Doug Johnson, Tim Dawson
Benton	—		
Big Stone	144	5/18/94	Tony Hertzel, Paul Hertzel
	100	5/16/96	Peder Svingen
Blue Earth	—		
Brown	—		
Carlton	130	5/29/95	Peder Svingen and Sue Barton
	104	5/21/88	Fran & Larry Weber
Carver	139	5/15/94	Bill Marengo, Denny Martin, Mike Mulligan
	138	5/16/92	Dennis Martin, Bill Marengo, Mike Mulligan, Jim Williams
Cass	—		
Chippewa	—		
Chisago	102	5/14/94	Robert Holtz, John Wallner, Jim Bender
Clay	90	5/18/91	Terry & Cory Olson, Jean Leckner
Clearwater	107	5/29/93	Doug Johnson
Cook	116	5/03/95	Peder Svingen and Sue Barton
	104	6/04/91	Ken & Molly Hoffman
Cottonwood	118	5/13/89	Henry Schmidt, Walter Harder, Ed Duerksen
	100	5/13/95	Ellis and Edna Gerber, Ed Duerksen
	89	5/11/96	Ellis and Edna Gerber, Ed Duerksen
Crow Wing	—		
Dakota	104	5/13/95	Drew and Becky Smith
	99	5/08/93	Drew Smith & Becky Roe-Smith
	93	5/21/91	Karol Gresser, Joanne Dempsey
Dodge	100	5/14/91	Bob & Steve Ekblad, Jerry Bonkoski
Douglas	82	5/15/94	Kris & Kyle Wicklund
	75	5/16/92	Kris Stamer, Kyle Wicklund
Faribault	—		
Fillmore	97	5/13/89	Filmore County Birders Club
Freeborn	104	5/23/90	Anne Marie Plunkett
Goodhue	76	5/15/92	Harlan Hostager
Grant	—		
Hennepin	—		
Houston	111	5/11/93	Jerry Bonkoski, Tony Casucci, Bob Ekblad, Jerry Pruett, Dave Squillace
	104	5/18/90	Anne Marie Plunkett
Hubbard	96	5/11/91	Ralph & Jean Leckner and Cory & Terry Olson
Isanti	50	5/26/93	Daphne & Meyers Peterson
	49	5/18/92	Daphne & Meyers Peterson
Itasca	—		
Jackson	—		
Kanabec	96	5/08/93	Craig Menze
Kandiyohi	140	5/20/95	Randy Fredrickson
	123	5/15/93	Ron Erpelding, Randy Fredrickson
Kittson	127	5/25/96	Peder Svingen
Koochiching	135	6/01/96	Tony Hertzel, Peder Svingen
	120	6/11/95	Peder Svingen
	92	8/07/94	Peder Svingen
Lac Qui Parle	121	5/11/94	Bill Marengo
Lake	117	5/22/95	Peder Svingen and Kim Eckert
	103	5/30/93	Tony & Ann Hertzel
	96	5/21/91	Renner Anderson, Chuck Neil, Bell Tefft, Steve Wilson, Suzanne Winkler
Lake of the Woods	146	5/26/96	Peder Svingen, Tony & Ann Hertzel
	136	5/29/93	Peder Svingen
Le Sueur	141	5/13/95	Ann & Tony Hertzel, Peder Svingen
	131	5/20/92	Peder Svingen

Lincoln	122	5/14/88	Ray Glassel, Bob Janssen, John Schladweiler
Lyon	142	5/14/88	Henry Kyllingstad, Paul Egeland
Mahnomen	—		
Marshall	114	5/08/93	Shelly Steva, Darlene Kelly, Randi Hodny, Linda Welk
Martin	—		
McLeod	—		
Meeker	—		
Mille Lacs	—		
Morrison	80	7/27/96	Tony Hertzel, Peder Svingen
Mower	—		
Murray	99	5/15/92	Nelvina De Kam, Johanna Pals
Nicollet	139	5/15/93	Tony Hertzel, Paul Hertzel
Nobles	91	5/21/90	Nelvina De Kam
Norman	—		
Olmsted	152	5/13/94	Jerry Bonkoski, Bob Ekblad, Jerry Pruett, Chuck Krulas, Jeff Stephenson
	130	5/09/91	Jerry Bonkoski, Bob Ekblad, Tony Casucci, Jerry Pruett, Dave Squillace
Otter Tail	144	5/15/91	Steve & Diane Millard
Pennington	—		
Pine	—		
Pipestone	77	5/14/88	Johanna Pals, Nelvina De Kam
Polk	156	5/19/90	Dave & Sharon Lambeth, Peder Svingen
Pope	—		
Ramsey	114	5/08/93	Robert Holtz, John Wallner
Red Lake	—		
Redwood	—		
Renville	—		
Rice	100	5/30/92	Rice County Bird Club
Rock	87	5/12/92	Nelvina De Kam
Roseau	162	5/27/95	Peder Svingen
	160	5/21/94	Peder Svingen
	134	8/14/92	Doug Johnson, Peder Svingen
Scott	—		
Sherburne	130	5/16/96	Tony Hertzel, Paul Hertzel
	68	5/23/90	Barb Kull, Alice Schroeder
Sibley	—		
St. Louis	177	5/18/96	Mike Hendrickson, Mark Ochs, Terry Brashear, Kim Risen
	173	5/18/96	Peder Svingen, Tony Hertzel, Paul Hertzel
	161	5/18/96	Don Kienholz, Dave Gilbertson, Bill Marengo, Peter Neubeck
	159	5/20/89	Mike Hendrickson, Kim Risen
	159	5/18/96	Kim Eckert, Barb Akre, Mike Citsay, Connie Osbeck
	158	5/18/96	Paul Egeland, Dave Benson, John Ellis, Mark Stensaas
	150	5/18/96	Ben Yokel, Paul Budde, Dave Cahlander
Stearns	—		
Steele	134	5/16/92	Ken & Amanda Vail, Gary Johnson, Nels Thompson,
	117	5/13/95	Ken Vail, Gary Johnson, Nels Thompson, Leanne Alt, Darryl Hill, Van Swank
	106	5/11/96	Gary Johnson, Leanne Alt, Terry Dorsey, Darryl Hill
Stevens	—		
Swift	113	5/14/94	Ray Glassel, Bob Janssen
Todd	—		
Traverse	—		
Wabasha	111	5/21/89	Helen Tucker, Alice Searles
Wadena	94	5/21/88	Jerome & Karol Gresser
Waseca	88	5/16/94	Ray Glassel
Washington	97	5/15/93	Robert Holtz and seven students
	95	5/11/91	Robert Holtz and four students
Watonwan	—		
Wilkin	—		
Winona	116	5/13/95	Howard Towle and Carol Schumacher
Wright	112	5/16/92	Mark Stensaas, John Hokema
Yellow Medicine	141	5/08/93	Parker Backstrom, Karl Bardon, Peder Svingen

Big Day History and the ABA

There is a 26-year history of Big Days in Minnesota. The first, conducted in May of 1970 by Kim Eckert and Paul Egeland, turned up 153 species. Since then our knowledge of the springtime distributions of birds in Minnesota has improved, in part due to the study, planning and testing of routes by birders conducting Big Days all across the state. This initial statewide mark of 153 now has been exceeded in three different counties alone, and the current statewide record total is nearly 40 birds higher.

Most of these high-total Big Days were completed in accordance with guidelines worked out by the American Birding Association (ABA). The ABA has written both a Code of Ethics and a set of Big Day Count Rules which help to make uniform (and sensible) the behaviors of birders, and thereby make comparable the lists and totals reported. These documents can be found in several places, most recently in the ABA *1995 Big Day Report*, which is published as a supplement to *Birding* (see Volume XXVIII, Number 3). Any old long list of birds found by any methods whatsoever doesn't constitute a Big Day in the eyes of the ABA. For instance, from their Code of Ethics, birders should "...only sparingly use recordings and similar methods for attracting birds", and from their Big Day Count Rules each participant should "...make every reasonable effort to identify personally and to help other team members identify every species counted by the team". As we might expect, sensitivity to the environment and to careful, jointly-made identifications are important elements in Big Days, just as they are any time we go out looking for birds.

But whether or not the ABA recognizes your next Big Day, if it's done in Minnesota then your fellow Minnesotans would like to hear about it. Send in your totals to:

Paul Hertzel
8461 Pleasant View Drive
Mounds View, MN 55112

8461 Pleasant View Drive, Mounds View, MN 55112.

BOOK REVIEWS

Birds and Forests: A Management and Conservation Guide, by Janet Green, 1995, State of Minnesota, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Reviewed by Dave Zumeta.

As a guide to the complex relationships between birds and forests in Minnesota and how to conserve them, this book is the best single source available. It includes a wealth of information, not only for birders, but also for forest landowners, field foresters, wildlife managers, and planners. In this guide, Jan Green successfully integrates her impressive knowledge of ornithology and forest management with a thorough review of recent literature in both fields.

In clearly written prose, with most technical forestry and ecological jargon clearly defined and explained, she makes this knowledge and information accessible to layperson and professional alike.

After a brief introduction, the next two chapters include highly informative overviews of forest bird distribution and abundance and species-habitat relationships. The final three chapters suggest ways to incorporate the habitat needs of birds in both large scale and site specific management plans. Six appendixes provide a host of useful reference material, including detailed information on forest bird distribution and abundance, life-history traits, habitat preferences, species of management concern, and local and regional studies that are sources of species lists.

The guide is unusually well edited and beautifully illustrated, with numerous high quality, well placed photographs and maps. Among the many fine publications of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, this is one of the best. If you want to learn more about Minnesota's forest birds and how to conserve them, this book is essential reading. **4720 E. 34th St., Minneapolis MN 55406.**

Birding Minnesota by Jay Michael Strangis. Falcon Press, 1996, 284 pages, 6x9", $16.95. Reviewed by Fred Lesher.

So, to take the bull by the horns, the bird by the beak, the bird guide by the cover, who needs another guide to finding birds in Minnesota? Isn't Eckert's most recent *A Birder's Guide to Minnesota* (over 800 locations plus references and resources) published in 1994 enough?

Indeed, there is duplication. Both guides direct a birder in Duluth to Hearding Island from 19th Street and Minnesota Avenue and to a scoping view of Hearding Island from the Port Terminal. Strangis' guide warns the reader/birder of the complexities of downtown Duluth, and provides a simplified map, clearly identifying only the major streets and highways. Eckert's guide goes into more detail (though he omits the Bayside Market at 19th and Minnesota) and offers a more detailed street map. If you know Duluth the way either writer does, you won't need either guide. If you want all the details and "read" maps at a glance, you'11 prefer Eckert's guide. If you become confused by details and any map looks like a maze, you'll prefer Strangis' guide.

Though this reviewer cannot vouch for every location description in Strangis' *Birding Minnesota*, those I did study seemed accurate without overwhelming detail. Generally, *Birding Minnesota* offers an easy to read guide to major and many lesser locations throughout the state.

Strangis' book offers six chapters. Chapter 1 offers advice about when to go birding, what to wear, hotlines, and birds on the Internet. This information is most useful to out-of-state birders and beginning birders. Chapter 2 discusses landforms, climate and migration. Chapter 3, the heart of the book, is divided into five regions, one covering the Twin Cities and four covering ecosystems: boreal, prairie, southern, and northern deciduous. Chapter 4 offers a month-by-month birding guide: January — Snowy Owls, February — resident northern owls, March — waterfowl, April — Greater Prairie-Chickens booming, etc.

Chapters 5 and 6 are in what might be labeled by anyone aged 50 and up the "new" symbol scan scheme. That is to say, the information in both chapters is presented by picture symbols. Chapter 5 is a checklist. The birder can check off species seen in a tiny Minnesota map beside the species. Each checklist species is printed in old-fashioned words, such as "Golden-winged Warbler," and gets a Minnesota map for ticking, a dagger if it is a "bird of choice" listed in Chapter 6, such as a Glaucous Gull, an "X" for nest-

ing evidence, a symbol for its regional preferences — my favorite is a setting/rising sun for the prairie region — and a bar-graph for monthly occurrence. A few species get an asterisk if they favor a specific location, such as Black Dog Lake or the Duluth Harbor. Chapter 6, "Minnesota's Choice Species," offers a small Minnesota range map in two tones and a brief text in a horizontal column about 1 1/2 inches wide. Here, readers and reviewers can quibble about which species are "choice," and about the comments, chances, and key sites offered for each of the 122 Minnesota birds of choice.

Illustrations in black and white are by Vera Ming Wong, who illustrated *Minnesota's Endangered Flora and Fauna*, among other books. I especially liked the Broad-winged Hawks in both portrait and soaring.

Many black and white photos enhance the pleasures of the book. There is a fine portrait by Bill Marchel of a Green-winged Teal on page 213. Visitors to Agassiz Refuge will recognize the headquarters and surrounding bogs and marshes on page 205. A warning to hardline Minnesota birders: a photograph of an observation deck at Rieck's Lake at Alma, **Wisconsin**, is found on page 171! Will Minnesota ever put an observation deck in Houston County?

This is a guide to birding in Minnesota that is easy to use, read, and carry. The author offers some history of local places and names, which some will find extraneous. This reviewer finds a whole system and cultivated approach to birding refreshing. In my own imagined bird guide, there is a guide to where to eat, and anecdotes of conversations with farmers and lonely railroad buffs encountered while birding.

Finally, Strangis offers something precious in his preface. He offers himself and his love of birds and Minnesota. I think he means what he says, and the quotation from Thoreau at the beginning of the book illustrates how some people feel about birding in Minnesota: "A child asked concerning a bobolink, 'What makes he sing so sweet, Mother? Do he eat flowers?'" **509 Winona St., La Crosse WI 54603.**

Lady Grayl: Owl With a Mission, by Robert W. Nero. Natural Heritage/Natural History, Inc., P.O. Box 95, Station O, Toronto Ontario, M4A 2M8, 176 pages; 49 photographs, paperback, $19.95. Reviewed by Jo Blanich.

The author who brought us *The Great Gray Owl, Phantom of the Northern Forest*, and whose name is synonymous with that of the Great Gray Owl, has now produced a personal account of his close relationship with a Great Gray Owl rescued as a starving runt from a wild brood.

Dr. Nero's keen observations and perceptions of the bird's behavior in many moods and settings over a period of nine years supplement his 25 years of research into Great Gray Owls in the wild and provide us with insights into a creature which is an integral part of our northern boreal forest. He takes us on a journey from the rescue of the bird to her exposure to the public for a national wildlife week exhibit and subsequent appearances at many events to promote, publicize, and raise funds for educational and research programs. Lady Grayl has become a public relations celebrity and ambassador, helping teach us about birds of prey, particularly to school children.

Chapters of the book describe home activities and behaviors such as feeding, molt, vocalizations, and responses to movements, sounds, darkness, light, and seasons. These observations provide a basis from which to interpret the activities and behaviors of wild owls. Traveling with an owl to schools and events resulted in many interesting and entertaining encounters.

One of the behaviors I found fascinating was Lady Grayl's response to a large hawk soaring outside, following it as it moved overhead. When the raptor flew beyond the windows and out of sight, she continued to track the bird, moving her head at just the right speed as if she

could still see it. This suggests a level of consciousness beyond what is usually attributed to birds.

Captivating black-and-white photographs illustrate and enhance the text. Dr. Nero brings a poet's skill to his writing; two collections of his poetry, "Woman by the Shore" and "Mulch Pile" have been published by Natural History, and six of these plus one other are included.

I enjoyed the book and recommend it to birders and all those interested in the natural history of this species. Highly readable, it gives us a view into the world of owls. **HC61 Box 46D–3, Deerwood MN 5644.**

BIRDING BY HINDSIGHT

A Second Look at Western (and Eastern) Sandpipers

Kim R. Eckert

In a previous article in this series on shorebirds (***The Loon*** 67:100–103), the author, wisely choosing discretion over valor, temporarily managed to avoid the subject of "peeps". This group of the smallest shorebirds, which includes Least, Semipalmated, Western, Baird's and White-rumped Sandpipers (some birders would also include a few other species within the genus *Calidris*), generally gives shorebirders the most headaches. This need not be the case, however, since there are plenty of other shorebirds out there which can also be a pain to identify. In other words, shorebirds may be among the most difficult birds for beginners, but, if the birder has learned to figure out at least some of those yellowlegs and dowitchers, telling the peeps apart is really no more difficult.

As with other articles in this identification series, there is no need for this piece to repeat information found in the standard field guides. And, at the same time, a complete analysis of complex identification points would be beyond the space limitations of this journal and the patience of its readers. With this in mind, there are really only six essential points to remember when trying to identify peeps — especially the notorious and mythical Western Sandpiper:

1) First and above all, put aside the field guides (Geographic included) and get ahold of a copy of "Field Identification of the Smaller Sandpipers Within the Genus *Calidris*" by Richard Veit and Lars Jonsson, which appeared in the September–October 1984 issue of *American Birds* (38:853–876). The article is so good it was reprinted three years later in the same journal (41:212–236), and it is about the best identification article on any group of birds I have ever seen. While it does not include the Baird's and White-rumped Sandpipers, it is no exaggeration to say that if you have this article there may be no need to read the rest of this

piece or any other book or article on Leasts, Semis and Westerns. (But if you'd like some further reading on the peeps, I would certainly also recommend *Shorebirds: An Identification Guide* by Hayman, Marchant and Prater, and Dennis Paulson's book *Shorebirds of the Pacific Northwest.*)

2) Keep in mind that plumages vary with age and the time of year. In other words, for example, an adult Semipalmated in fall might look gray overall and quite unlike a fresh-looking, even somewhat rusty, adult Semi in spring or juvenile in fall.

3) There are more important things to study than leg color. The non-black legs of a Least might appear to be quite dark if the bird is in unfavorable light, at a distance or wading in mud. A Least's plumage or bill shape is usually more evident and useful than its leg color, and, besides, there is no difference in the leg color of the other four peeps.

4) If the bill on the peep you're studying appears to be somewhat decurved, you unfortunately haven't narrowed down its identity — and it certainly is not necessarily a Western. Individual peeps of any of the five species can have decurved bills — in fact, with the exception of Semis, almost every peep you study will have a slightly decurved bill!

5) If the plumage of the peep you're studying appears to be somewhat rusty, you unfortunately haven't narrowed down its identity — and it certainly is not necessarily a Western (sound familiar?). While a Baird's would be more accurately described as buffy, individuals of all the other four peeps, especially when in juvenal plumage, often have some rusty feather edges on the upperparts.

6) And finally: yes, Virginia, there may be a Santa Claus, but, contrary to popular belief, there is no Western Sandpiper on Minnesota's regular list. In fact, there is currently only one specimen record in the state (which might need to be reexamined?), no photographs (although some may exist of a probable Western in Duluth in May of this year), and only two documented sight records (with a third pending) which have been accepted by the Records Committee. Yes, Virginia, there have indeed been several peeps identified as Western Sandpipers over the years in Minnesota — and some of them were my records before I read that 1984 article. And, yes, the species continues to be reported on a regular basis in neighboring states. But I strongly suspect the majority of these sightings, perhaps virtually all of them, both those in former years in Minnesota and the ones still reported nearby, are erroneous.

So much for some basic essentials. Now for some idle ramblings on each of the five peeps, especially that Western Sandpiper, plus some thoughts on two potential Western look-alikes: the Sanderling and Dunlin. Again, what follows is not intended to be a thorough analysis. Rather, these comments are only intended to help the reader to start noticing the more useful field marks and to be aware of those features which may lead to misidentifications.

Least Sandpiper. You have spotted a peep with a slightly but definitely decurved bill, extensive rusty coloration on the upperparts and what appear to be dark legs. A Western, right? No, a Least would be far more likely. A finely tipped and slightly but noticeably decurved bill is entirely normal for this species. Couple this with the extensive and generally uniform rusty coloration of its upperparts (which is a feature of juvenile Leasts especially), and its easy to see why the Least — when its legs are muddy or hard to see — is often mistaken for a Western. Note that Leasts in both alternate (i.e., breeding) and juvenal plumages usually appear darker on the breast and browner or more reddish-brown on the upperparts than either the grayer Semi or Western. Also note the color of the upperparts on a Least is more uniform and extensive; when rustiness is present on a Semi or Western it tends to be limited to certain areas — especially on the scapulars, but also sometimes on the head, back and tertials.

While the Least is slightly smaller than

either a Semi or Western, this difference would probably be noticed only if direct comparison were available. Just as useful is the Least's call note: a high-pitched "crreeep", which is similar in quality to the lower-pitched note of the Baird's.

Semipalmated Sandpiper. Now you see a peep with a bit of downcurve towards the tip of the bill, some definite rusty edges on the back, scapulars and tertials, and black legs. A Western, right? Probably not: a Semipalmated would be far more likely. Unfortunately some Semis (probably adult females) can have a bill which is every bit as long and decurved as on some shorter-billed Westerns (probably juvenile males).

Equally as troublesome is that many Semis in alternate and juvenal plumages have rusty feathers on the head, back, scapulars and/or tertials — a feature generally thought to occur only on Westerns until that 1984 *American Birds* article. But a dozen years later such Semis are still routinely misidentified as Westerns. If the bird in question is an adult, try to see if the rusty coloration is on the feather edges (indicating a Semi) or on the bases or centers of the scapular feathers (indicating a Western). If, however, that rusty bird is a juvenile, the identification becomes more difficult: the feather edges on Semis tend to look more buff than rusty, the color is not as sharply delineated from the grayer feathers of the wing coverts, and its back has a scalier look than on a Western.

There is usually no noticeable difference in overall size between Semis and Westerns, but of possible use is the difference in their call notes: the Semipalmated gives a nondescript "chut" or "churp", while the Western has a thin, White-rumped-like "jit" note.

Western Sandpiper. I think it was someone named Horace Greeley who said, "Go West, young man." Sound advice, perhaps, in the 1800s, but today it's almost always the wrong direction to go when identifying shorebirds in Minnesota. As mentioned elsewhere in this article, there are only a few documented records in the state, along with a long history of other things misidentified as Westerns. The sections on Least, Semipalmated and White-rumped Sandpipers, Sanderling and Dunlin discuss the reasons why these other species are mistaken for Westerns.

A Western in full alternate plumage should be distinctive enough, as long as the possibility of the somewhat similar White-rumped is considered and precluded. During fall migration, the correct identification of a juvenile or molting adult Western would probably require careful study, complete field notes or a photo, and consultation with sources other than the standard field guides. And while a generally pale grayish peep in basic (i.e., winter) plumage in Minnesota would not be a Semipalmated (which would not molt into basic plumage until much farther south) and might actually be a Western, the more likely possibility of Sanderling must be considered.

Baird's Sandpiper. Here, at least, is one peep not likely to be confused with a Western. In both alternate and juvenal plumages, the overall buffiness of this peep's plumage — especially in juveniles and especially on the breast — bear more of a resemblance to a Pectoral or even a Buff-breasted. Of course, given a decent view, the underparts patterns on Pectorals and Buff-breasteds differ from the Baird's, as do their leg colors. Along with the White-rumped, the Baird's is larger than the other three peeps, and its folded wing tips extend beyond the tail, giving this peep's silhouette a distinctively long and pointed look posteriorly. Listen also for its call: a rolling "crrreep", similar in quality to the Least and Pectoral and in between those two in pitch.

Two caveats. First, the field guides are fond of mentioning the scaly appearance of this species' back, even though such scaliness is typical of many shorebirds in juvenal plumage. And second, when trying to identify a Baird's, beware of the illustrations in the shorebirds guide by Hayman *et al.*, which to my eye fail to accurately portray what a Baird's looks like.

White-rumped Sandpiper. When an individual of this species and its rump is seen in flight, this is certainly a distinctive bird. At rest, however, it poses a definite source of confusion with the Western Sandpiper unless the White-rumped's larger size and wing tips extension beyond the tail are noted. Both White-rumpeds and Westerns in both alternate and juvenal plumages have several features in common: a slightly decurved bill (note, however, the White-rumped's bill is usually paler at the base, unlike any other peep), a clearly delineated set of rusty scapulars, a distinctive set of fine streaks or rows of spots across the breast, and even the same call note: a thin, flinty "jit". In addition, just like a Western in alternate plumage, an alternate-plumaged White-rumped also has a rusty crown and ear coverts.

It is also worth noting that White-rumpeds are generally seen in Minnesota only in spring migration; in fall they are only casual or rare — although this is still a more likely species then than a Western.

Sanderling. When in basic plumage, this is potentially another species which strongly resembles a Western. Although the Sanderling is larger, with a straighter bill and a bolder wing stripe, its pale gray overall plumage looks a lot like that of a basic-plumaged Western.

Dunlin. Though the Dunlin is also larger than a Western Sandpiper and its plumage is darker gray overall, when in juvenal plumage it might be confused with a Western due to its clearly drooping bill, its rusty-edged scapulars and its finely streaked or spotted underparts.

One final thought. If the hints expressed here have been helpful, and you now have the confidence to look at a peep without awe and fear, I have some good news, some bad news, and some more good news. The good news is you are well on your way to being able to manage one of the most difficult bird groups of them all. The bad news is there is still another group of shorebirds even more complicated. A group so challenging that the additional good news is I won't even think about writing an article in this series about them. But be aware of the existence of those four small Eurasian shorebirds known as stints: i.e., the Red-necked, Little, Temminck's and Long-toed. Although there are no records of stints in or near Minnesota, some of them could occur here — and perhaps already have — but be easily overlooked or misidentified as something else. For more information about this group, be sure to consult the *American Birds* article mentioned earlier in this article. **8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.**

Close Encounters With a Hungry Great Gray Owl

Ronald M. Randklev and Arlene Randklev

We are a retired couple living on Lake Superior near Grand Marais, with about 600 feet of combined lake shore and river frontage at the mouth of the Devils Track River. In addition to standard bird feeders by our house, we maintain a lake shore feeder which each day is supplied with 40–60 lbs. of fish and meat scraps from a local market. A second beach feeding area is

baited with corn to attract ducks and geese. Each morning we are greeted by flocks of gulls, Common Ravens, American Crows, Mallards, Black Ducks, and up to 12 Bald Eagles. The feeding confusion and wonderful noise created by about 650 large birds makes a great way for us to start each day. Most of these birds stay here the year around (except during the summer nesting season) and serve to attract migrants flying along the shore.

The winter of 1995–96 will be remembered for its high severity index and for new all-time snowfall and cold temperature records. It is especially memorable to us as a banner year for northern visitors: we were privileged to see the three Gyrfalcon color phases, Snowy Owls, a Northern Saw-whet Owl, and two Great Gray Owls. This account deals with our experiences with one of the Great Gray Owls.

On 24 February 1996, in dim early morning light, we spotted the silhouette of a large owl, which we guessed was a Great Gray, perched in a tree near our beach "meat feeder." The owl left the beach area in the semi-darkness and began to fly around our yard, landing on cedar snags and spruce trees, as if to acquaint itself with the area. With increased light, we could now confirm that it was indeed a Great Gray. The owl stopped moving and settled into an area of dense cover near our river bank. We could determine the owl's location by watching the Common Ravens which flew in tight circles around the Great Gray.

Shortly after noon, the owl left the dense cover and flew directly to the meat feeder. After stepping over sausages, moose ribs, pork, beef, fish, and turkey and chicken parts, the owl jumped onto a whole chicken (dressed) and began to tear strips of meat from the breast. In its haste to eat, the owl once fell over on its left side; later it fell forward on its face with tail straight up — not a careful eater! After each feeding period, the owl settled over the chicken so that it was completely hidden. Not only did this protect its prey, it also kept the chicken from freezing in the sub-zero cold. The owl remained in this position for more than 18 hours, until frightened away by a stray dog the following morning. As soon as we chased the dog away, the owl returned to the chicken and resumed eating. Shortly thereafter, the dog returned and the owl flew to a snow bank 12 feet in front of our large living room window. Although the owl remained in our yard for the next 2 1/2 weeks, it did not again return to the beach area.

The Boreal Owl and the Northern Saw-whet Owl have been observed thawing out frozen prey with their body (Bondrup-Nielsen S. 1977) but this has apparently not previously been observed in the Great Gray Owl. (pers. comm., R.W. Nero)

With the owl now in proximity to our picture window, we were able to observe it at close range. Likewise, the owl could observe us moving about in the house. Another whole chicken (dressed) was placed about ten feet from the owl (it did not move). It quickly pounced on the chicken and again guarded its prey for the next 31 hours, eating at 30–45 minute intervals. We set our alarm and were able to check the owl several times during the night. Shortly before dawn, a fast-moving snowstorm completely covered the owl. We were not sure that it was alive until it shook its head to remove the snow.

After several days of nearly continuous eating and relative immobility, the owl became more active. It began to take short flights and also chose different roosting trees every night. Each morning, however, the owl was always waiting to receive its chicken offering somewhere in sight of our back door. Its daily ration was now half a chicken, plus a boned chicken breast fillet. When the chicken was placed in the usual feeding area, the owl would immediately soar down from a nearby roost and seize it. After quickly wolfing down the fillet, the remaining half chicken was usually carried to a tree roost or sometimes to our garage roof.

Many times after eating, the owl cleaned its face by rubbing each side briskly in the snow.

Early on, we noted and accepted the owl's preference for chicken, even though local birders had told us that the owl would not eat carrion. The chicken which we fed the owl was outdated (by law), but it was not decayed. Carrion feeding in the Great Gray Owl has previously been noted, but it is considered uncommon; Nero (1980) mentions one eating butchered moose remains (fat and flesh), one apparently feeding on a trapper's discarded marten carcasses, and others evidently eating snowshoe hares caught in snares. One thing is clear, our visiting owl found chicken meat quite to its liking.

When not eating chicken, the owl spent many hours perched on top of a cedar pole holding several bird feeders. While it watched the action of smaller birds, Mallards, Black Ducks, and snowshoe hares at and below the feeder, it never made any attempt to catch them, and they showed no fear of the owl. The gray squirrels, however, teased the owl continuously, and although it tried many times to catch one, it was never successful. (A Great Gray Owl that appeared in a backyard this same winter in Winnipeg, however, did capture a gray squirrel. Aline Ludlow, who witnessed this event, said it took the owl a considerable effort before it made the catch. The owl stayed with the carcass of the squirrel until it was picked clean from 29 February–2 March, pers. comm., R.W. Nero.)

The owl's reaction to sighting an eagle was spectacular. With head tilted slightly forward, and eyes wide open, the owl would elongate its body to ramrod stiffness until it looked like a 3 1/2-foot long branch stub about 4–5 inches in diameter. We saw this happen eight times, and each time an eagle was in view. The presence of coyotes, a stray dog, a Gyrfalcon, another Great Gray Owl, American Crows, and Common Ravens did not elicit the elongation response. This interesting behavior has previously been reported for the Great Gray Owl. For example, Nero (1994) writes: "The tall, slim posture, a display observed in many species of owls, is generally known as the concealment posture. It is believed to help conceal a bird through its resemblance to an upright branch or stub. Of course, for full effect, this would have to be in a suitable situation. Recently, some authorities have viewed this display somewhat differently, preferring to call it the 'erect alarm posture' ."

Near the end of the owl's visit it disappeared for one full day and one night. We were sure that it had left and were feeling sad about it, when it suddenly reappeared the following morning. In a hurry to feed the owl I ran outside with the chicken offering, while clad only in long johns, Sorel boots, and chopper mittens. The owl, which was also in a hurry to eat, set its wings and met me halfway to the feeding area. The owl very quickly removed the chicken from my chopper covered hand and then flew back to its perch. When a Great Gray with outstretched wings lands on your gloved hands and makes eye contact at a distance of 12–15 inches, it is an unforgettable encounter. Two days later our friend left, a well nourished bird, hopefully strong enough to return to its home base.

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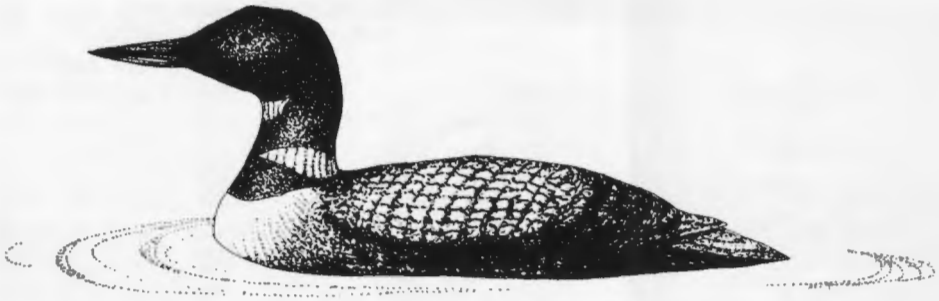
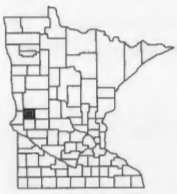
HC 80, Box 230 Croftville, Grand Marais, MN 55604.



NOTES OF INTEREST

LECONTE'S, SHARP-TAILED, AND HENSLOW'S SPARROWS IN GRANT COUNTY — 
Since 1990, Northern Prairie Science Center of the National Biological Service has conducted annual surveys of breeding birds in Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) fields in Grant County and eight counties in Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Most CRP land in the northern Great Plains is planted to a mixture of grasses and legumes, although vegetation varies considerably among fields (*Great Plains Research* 3:273–295). Many breeding birds use these perennial grasslands established by the CRP, including several species that are generally associated with moist grasslands or wet meadows. The LeConte's Sparrow is a common and widespread breeding bird from central to northern Minnesota (Janssen, R. B. 1987. *Birds in Minnesota*. Univ. Minnesota Press, Minneapolis). Grant County occurs on the southern edge of the species' breeding distribution. LeConte's Sparrows have increased dramatically in recent years in CRP fields in the northern Great Plains, e.g., see Igl and Johnson (*Prairie Naturalist* 27:89–94). In CRP fields surveyed in Grant County, LeConte's Sparrows increased from no breeding pairs in 1990–1992 to two pairs (0.38 pairs/100 ha) in 1993, four (0.76 pairs/100 ha) in 1994, and 74 (14.14 pairs/100 ha) in 1995. The Sharp-tailed Sparrow is a resident breeder in extreme northwestern Minnesota (Janssen 1987). Although Sharp-tailed Sparrows generally prefer moister habitats than LeConte's and Henslow's Sparrows, Sharp-tailed Sparrows are occasionally recorded in CRP fields in the northern Great Plains (*Great Plains Research* 3:273–295). Sharp-tailed Sparrows were observed in CRP fields in Grant County in three of six years during 1990–1995, including one breeding pair (0.22 pairs/100 ha) in 1990, one (0.20 pairs/100 ha) in 1991, and two (0.38 pairs/100 ha) in 1994. The Henslow's Sparrow is an uncommon to local breeding bird in southeastern Minnesota and a casual breeder in the western part of the state (Janssen 1987). Grant County occurs on the extreme northwestern edge of the Henslow's Sparrow's breeding distribution. At 9:45 A.M. on 22 June 1995, during a breeding bird survey in southeastern Grant County, I observed a male Henslow's Sparrow singing from the top of a thistle in a weedy Waterfowl Production Area that was adjacent to a CRP field. The bird had a flat-headed profile, olive-colored head and nape, reddish-brown wings, and distinct streaks on its buff breast and sides. The song was a cricket-like, "tse-lick." The Henslow's Sparrow was secretive, but I was able to observe the bird singing and foraging for about 15 minutes from distances of 3–10 meters. I did not see or hear any other Henslow's Sparrow in the area, nor did I see any behaviors indicative of breeding. Also in June 1995, Millard (***The Loon*** 67:186) noted a male Henslow's Sparrow in nearby Wilkin County. I appreciate the cooperation of the

numerous land owners and operators who allowed access to their property. I acknowledge C. J. Johnson, R. L. Manson, L. A. Murphy, K. L. Richardson, M. D. Schwartz, C. M. Shoemaker, J. M. Steiner, and K. A. Ward for their assistance in the field. I thank D. P. Fellows, D. H. Johnson, and H. A. Kantrud for constructive comments on this note. **Lawrence D. Igl, Northern Prairie Science Center, National Biological Service, Jamestown, ND 58401.**

SAVANNAH SPARROW OVERWINTERS AT A BROOKLYN PARK FEEDING STATION — During early December 1995, Song Sparrows were observed at my feeding station seven times through 10 December. On 13 December 1995, I again observed what I initially believed to be a Song Sparrow with a short tail. This bird had a bold center breast spot. Observation had been made at a shaded ground feeding station located under white pines. On 15 December 1995 this individual was observed on a tray feeder in direct sunlight. Much to my surprise I observed yellow lores which extended back as a supercilium. Repeated observations (a total of 129 times) revealed the following characteristics: light colored lower mandible, upper mandible dark, short notched tail, fine streaking on breast and flanks, light gray crown stripe and pink colored legs and feet. I last observed the Savannah Sparrow on 13 March 1996. It had survived a winter which had included a major freezing rain/ice storm on 17 January 1996, and a record setting low temperature of -32°F on 21 February 1996. **Oscar L. Johnson, 7733 Florida Circle, Brooklyn Park, MN 55445.**

Savannah Sparrow, January 1996, Brooklyn Park, Hennepin Couny. Photo by Oscar Johnson.

A BOREAL OWL IN KANDIYOHI COUNTY — On the morning of 27 January 1996, I received a call from a friend, Doug Urban. Doug and his brother operate a dairy farm in northwest Kandiyohi County, and Doug indicated seeing an owl near the barn that he could not identify. Doug knows the typical owls for our area quite well, so his call sparked my curiosity and a brief discussion ensued. Doug described the size and some markings, but not wanting to spook the bird he didn't get a really good look. After being granted permission to come out and look for the bird, I called Ron Erpelding to join me. With speculation we jubilantly drove the 20 miles. Doug was gone when we arrived at the house, but his wife Lynn indicated where the bird had been seen. The bird was still present and easily located sitting in the cold sun on the southeast side of a wooded pasture near a large open-sided shed. The owl was only about 12 feet up so viewing was excellent. The belly was facing us but the head was turned almost completely around. Body markings looked very similar to a Northern Saw-whet Owl, which was my first guess from inside the car. Ron immediately indicated, however, the size was larger. I agreed, and the excitement level rose; we either had a Saw-whet on steroids or the county's

Boreal Owl, 27 January 1996, Kandiyohi County. Photo by Randy Frederickson.

first Boreal Owl record before us. Ron crossed to the other side of the bird to try and see the head markings, while I stayed put in case the bird turned or flew. It did neither and made no indication it was even aware of our presence. Ron gave me a "thumbs up" and whispered loudly, "It's a Boreal." I eagerly crossed to Ron's location and saw the white spots on the dark head. The eyes were closed and the head tucked, making the facial disks hard to see. A noise caused the bird to momentarily raise its head, giving us better views of the beak and light-colored facial disks outlined in black. There was no question we had a Boreal Owl. We excitedly drove back to Wilmar and checked a few more color plates of Boreal Owls in Ron's library. We called a mutual friend, Ralph Seybert, to join us, picked up my wife Jean and daughter Laura, and returned to the Urbans' for photographs. Five excited birders, ranging in ages from 9 to 67, all got a "lifer". The Boreal Owl disappeared later that afternoon. Ten days of bitter cold, wind and deep snow made relocation efforts fruitless. **Randy Frederickson, 416–19th St. NW, Wilmar, MN 56206; Ron Erpelding, 701–4th St. SW, Wilmar, MN 56206.**

DIVERSE CONCENTRATION OF WATERFOWL IN DAKOTA AND GOODHUE COUNTIES — During the first few days of April 1996, I could see large flocks of waterfowl flying in the distance, in and out of the vicinity of the western end of Lake Byllesby. At this time, the more easily accessible eastern end of the lake was frozen over. With so many birds flying around, I knew there had to be open water. On Friday, 5 April, I had the opportunity to investigate when my time wasn't as limited. Parking at Lakeside Cemetary, I was able to view the bay on its eastern side from the high bank there. The bay was free of ice, as was much the rest of the lake to the right and west. Hundreds of geese and ducks were on the water and in the air. As many birds that were leaving, more were flying in to replace them. Scanning with binoculars revealed an astonishing variety of species immediately below me in the bay. Common Loons, all three mergansers, coots, Pied-billed Grebes, and at least 15 species of ducks. Farther out by the cattails were Tundra Swans, white and blue phase Snow Geese, Greater White-fronted Geese, and Canada Geese. After studying the area with my scope, I decided I wanted a better view, particularly of the birds farther out across the lake. I drove a short distance passed the cemetary to an access area where you can get down to the shoreline. Setting up my scope again, I studied the Snow Geese and swans. I noticed two unusually white and clean birds among the Snow Geese. This seemed unusual as all of the rest of the white phase geese were very dirty and seemed gray in compari-

son. Focusing on the birds with my scope at 60X, I could see they were Ross' Geese. Associating so closely with the Snow Geese, it was easy to compare overall size, head profiles and bill shapes. Interestingly, among the Tundra Swans was an obvious immature plumaged bird. Although I noted it as it was the only immature bird in the flock, I didn't pay particularly close attention to it until later. Returning home, I notified the hotline about the Ross' Geese and then phoned friends to tell them the news and hopefully get the information out on the internet. Ray Glassel was among several birders that went to see the birds and he phoned back to report his additional discovery: Had I seen the immature Trumpeter Swan in among the Tundras? Well, yes and no. But it was worth additional study with better information and a trip back to the lake for another look. Arriving on Sunday, many of the birds had left the area, including all of the Tundra Swans. However, the immature plumaged bird remained and allowed easy viewing and studying over the next several days. (See *Birding* Vol. XXVI #5, October 1994 for an excellent article, "Identifying Trumpeter and Tundra Swans" by Michael A. Patton and Matthew T. Heindel. It covers many points missing from field guides and has more detailed information about juvenile and immature birds. It was very useful while studying this bird.) I don't know if this is any kind of record for Minnesota, but I personally have never before encountered such a diversity of waterfowl at a single location. Totaling the swans, geese and ducks comes to 24 species, and is a pretty good piece of the regular species on the Minnesota checklist. Include the Trumpeter, an (still?) accidental species, and this was a noteworthy event. **Drew Smith, 3606 Widgeon Way, Eagan, MN 55123.**

A BARROW'S GOLDENEYE IN RAMSEY AND SCOTT COUNTIES — Date: 29 November, 1995; Location: Lilydale, Mississippi River, Ramsey County. An adult male Barrow's Goldeneye was spotted with a group of about 200 Common Goldeneyes. Direct comparisons were made with many male Common Goldeneyes. The field marks were obvious, easily observed, and included a larger, more square head with a more abrupt forehead, a longer white loral spot which was crescent shaped and extended well above the eye, more black in the back which extended farther down the sides of the bird, and a series of white marks contained within the black back. This is probably the same male which occurred in St. Paul and at Black Dog Lake last winter. This is also quite possibly the same male which was subsequently sighted at the Blue Lake sewage lagoon, Scott County beginning 2-3 December 1995. I checked the Lilydale area on 2-3 December and subsequently without seeing the Barrow's. **Karl Bardon, 1430 – 100th Ave. NW #212, Coon Rapids, MN 55433.**

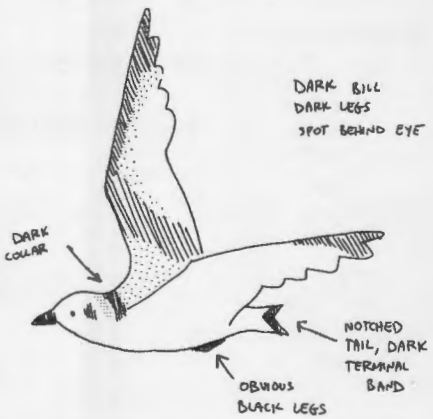
Barrow's Goldeneye, 10 December 1995, Scott County. Photo by Paul Budde.

On Saturday, 2 December 1995, I stopped at the Blue Lake sewage treatment plant in Scott County to check out the wintering waterfowl. My attention was immediately

drawn to a duck not more than 20 feet away which had a black back with seven or eight distinct white marks running up its side. For the next 30 minutes I was able to directly compare a male Barrow's Goldeneye with the Common Goldeneyes in the pond, having both species in my Kowa TSN–2 at the same time. I was able to note the purple head with its distinctive white crescent. The bill was shorter than that of the Common Goldeneyes next to it. Its forehead was flat in comparison to the Commons, and the head sloped to the back rather than the more abrupt drop of the Common. The back of the bird had seven or eight white rectangles running up its side in a field of black feathers. Near the tail of the duck was another white rectangle in the black area. The black and white markings were very distinct and clean cut, unlike those of the Commons which had a more blended appearance. The posture of the bird make it appear smaller than the Commons around it. Unlike many of the recent Barrow's sightings in Minnesota this bird stayed in the same area for several weeks and was still being observed into February. **Craig Mandel, 10211 Cedar Lake Road, #120, Minnetonka, MN 55305.**

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE IN DULUTH — On 16 September 1995 I was birding

the shore of Lake Superior near the recreation area of Minnesota Point in Duluth. Several hundred birds, most of them gulls, were visible off Wisconsin Point. A few of the smaller gulls — perhaps five or six — left the group and began flying down the lakeshore towards Duluth and I scanned them as they approached. All but one were obviously Bonaparte's Gulls. The single gull which did not appear to be a Bonaparte's was trailing the main group and not closely associating with it. As I watched this gull through my binoculars, it soon become apparent that this immature bird was either a Black-legged Kittiwake or a Black-headed Gull. As it came closer I was able to note several key field marks. Its manner of flight was very light and easy. It flew higher and more directly than the nearby Bonaparte's Gulls which tended to fly rather close to the surface of the water, weaving and chasing each other. Its bill and legs were dark, if not completely black. Though I was unable to observe the dorsal side very well, since I was below the gull, I could make out that the upper wing showed a pattern of a broad "M". There was considerable dark on the outer wing, while the remainder of the wing's upperparts were grayish, with slightly darker lesser coverts. A dark mark was visible behind the dark eye (though this did not appear to be a "comma" as some field guides portray). The head was otherwise white. What was probably a dark collar was also visible, but again, since I was below the bird I was unable to confirm that it continued completely around the back of the neck. I was unable to see most of the bird's back, but what I could see appeared to be a light gray. The underside was generally unmarked. The tail was white, slightly notched and had a wide, dark terminal band. These field marks indicated that the bird was a Black-legged Kittiwake. As it was cruising down the shore, it suddenly veered off and, after flying nearly overhead, it flew toward the harbor. I did not see it again. **Anthony Hertzel, 8461 Pleasant View Drive, 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.

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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.

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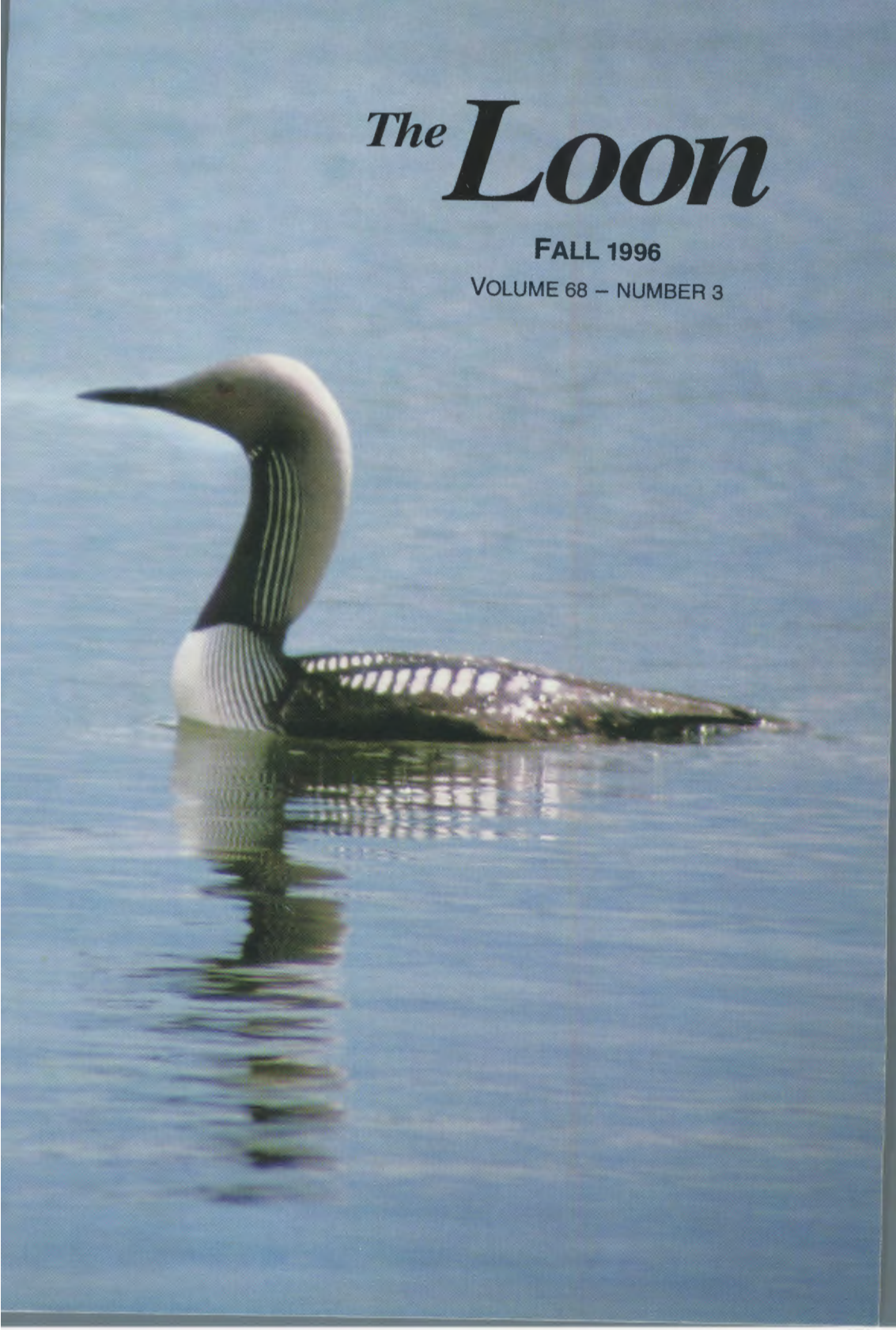

The Loon

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A Pacific Loon Sighting

Chuck Mayer

Early on the morning of 2 July 1996, I was walking around Lake Harriet in Minneapolis for some exercise. I was carrying a small pair of binoculars (6x30) in case I saw something of interest, (my wife Jane and I had seen an immature Common Loon on the lake on 14 June). As I neared the beach on the north end of the lake, I looked out and saw a swimming bird with a familiar silhouette. Despite being backlit, its thick neck and the angle of its bill marked it as a loon. I did have a moment's hesitation because it seemed fairly small.

I focused my binoculars on it, and noticed immediately the white-spotted black back of an adult loon, but the head and neck were wrong for a Common Loon. The bird was about 30 or 40 yards out, so it was reasonably clear through the binoculars even though the light was poor under a heavy cloud cover. It was swimming and preening, not diving for food, so I had several minutes to confirm identification points. I noticed a black bill, black face fading into medium gray at the back of the head and down the neck, a black throat, and quite white at the breast. I needed to get home to check my Peterson's *Field Guide to Western Birds*, but I was quite sure I had seen a Pacific Loon.

Once I confirmed my identification points with the book (and noted I should have seen the black and white vertical stripes on the side of the neck), I thought about letting the birding community know. But I didn't know how. A call to the Bell Museum was of little help. So I called a person whose name I had seen in an article in the Star Tribune in an article about birdwatching. He was polite, told me about the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union and that there was a birding hotline, but in effect said to call back if I saw the bird again.

Pacific Loon with immature Common Loon, 11 July 1996, Lake Harriet, Minneapolis, Hennepin County. Photo by Anthony Hertzel.

My wife and I were both attuned to Pacific Loons because we had vacationed in Alaska in 1995 and had hoped to, in vain, to see one while we were there. Now I hoped this would not be just a one-time sighting. Though I walked around Lake Harriet daily in the morning or in the evening, I didn't see the Pacific Loon again until Tuesday, 9 July. I am quite sure it was there prior to this, I just didn't have the optics to see it. This time it was early in the afternoon, under bright sunshine, and the bird was about 30 yards from shore on the west side of the lake. In sunlight, the full beauty of an adult Pacific Loon was apparent. I made another phone call and this time the word got out. My sighting was confirmed within an hour, and many other birders were able to catch sight of this rare and beautiful visitor.

Jane and I saw the loon several more times, but the best opportunity was on Thursday, 11 July. That evening we were walking around the lake when we saw the loon on the south side, not 40 feet from shore. It was so close you could see the plumage details with the naked eye. The bird seemed oblivious to walkers, joggers, roller bladers, even people excitedly pointing and looking through binoculars. And it was gorgeous, in vivid full adult plumage. The gray on the head and neck with its velvety texture, the blackish iridescent purple throat, the striping on the sides of the neck, and the four distinct areas of white spots on its back, all were fantastic.

It was not as large as a Common Loon — barely larger than a Mallard. That was apparent because there were Mallards paddling about just a few feet away. The loon had come up to the end of a sand spit formed by the flow of a storm outlet into the lake, and the Mallards were feeding around this spit. What a thrill! This has been, without question, the most exciting birding experience of my life. **4136 Salem Ave., St. Louis Park, MN 55416.**

Editor's note: The Pacific Loon was seen by hundreds of people and remained on Lake Harriet until 16 July 1996.

Black Tern Sightings in Minnesota 1990–1995

Richard Baker and Jeff Hines

A compilation of Black Tern *(Chlidonias niger)* observations reported from Minnesota during the period of 1990–1995, including responses to a 1991 poster survey, yielded information about 454 unique locations where the species was sighted, including 63 locations where nesting was confirmed. These results provide a qualitative description of the current distribution of this species in the state. Black Terns were observed in 71 of the state's 87 counties, and the species appears to remain well-distributed throughout the range of appropriate habitat in Minnesota. The relative paucity of observations throughout the state's prairie and prairie-forest transition regions, however, are a reminder of the deterioration and loss of wetland habitat that has followed the conversion of this land to agriculture and other uses.

Introduction

The black Tern is a semi-colonial bird that breeds in shallow freshwater marshes with emergent vegetation from the northern United States through central Canada, with the core of the population found in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, North and South Dakota, and Minnesota (Dunn and Agro 1995). Data from the National Biological Service's Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) indicate that the species' North American and Upper Midwest populations experienced declines during the period of 1966–1979, although these declines may have subsided since then (Sauer 1996, Table 1). Concern over the status of the Black Tern has resulted in the species being included as a Migratory Nongame Bird of Management Concern by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS 1995). In

Figure 1. "Wanted" poster, (original 11" x 17").

addition, the Black Tern has been designated as Endangered in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, and of Special Concern in Iowa and Wisconsin (Hands *et al.,* 1989). Within Minnesota, Black Terns have always been common and widely distributed (Eliason 1989), but BBS data again suggest a population decline during the period of 1996–1979, with apparent stabilization since then (Sauer 1996, Table 1).

While Minnesota's population of Black Terns is likely the largest in the north central United States, and may well be the largest in the entire United States, evidence of past declines from BBS data analyses indicates that the future of the state's population may not be secure. Recognizing the need to gather baseline information on the distribution of Black Terns within the state, in 1991 the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' Nongame Wildlife Program (NWP) initiated a qualitative survey of sightings of the species.

Methods and Materials

In early 1991, NWP research staff implemented a "wanted poster" strategy to gather information on the distribution of Black Terns in Minnesota. Previously, this tool had been used very effectively in the state to obtain reports on a wide variety of bird, reptile, and mammal species. These successes demonstrated that a widely distributed poster requesting observations from the public would serve as an inexpensive and effective way to determine the current range of the species, provide baseline information for qualitatively monitoring changes in its summer distribution, and identify portions of the state that might be the focus of a more quantitative (and more costly) monitoring program for the species in the future.

NWP staff developed and printed 1,000 copies of a poster with simple descriptive information, an original line drawing, a brief explanation of the survey, and instructions for reporting sightings (Figure 1). In late May 1991, the poster (along with a cover letter asking that it be posted in a prominent place) was mailed to public locations throughout the state, including state parks, DNR field offices, state cooperative extension offices, federal agency offices (e.g. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service), nature centers, and libraries. A press release was used to generate media attention. NWP staff also developed a data form that was distributed to those DNR personnel likely to receive reports in response to the poster. In some cases, reports were followed up with a field visit to obtain additional information (e.g. to verify nesting activity).

In 1996, NWP staff compiled all reports of Black Tern observations for Minnesota received by the DNR since 1990. Thus, the results presented here include sightings reported in direct response to the poster distribution, as well as sightings received prior and subsequent to the poster survey. In compiling observations, distinction was made between those reporting confirmed Black Tern nesting activity and those reporting Black Tern

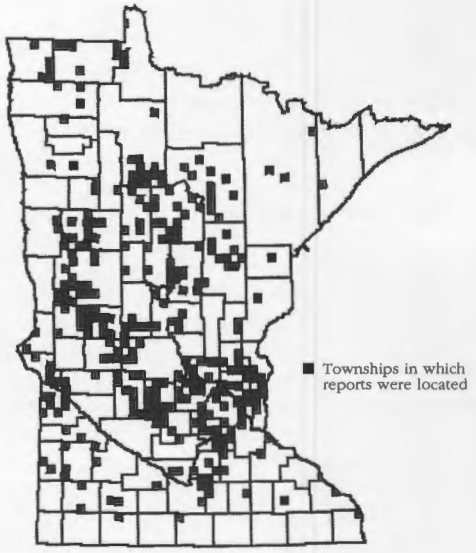

Figure 2. Distribution of Black Tern sighting reports, by township.

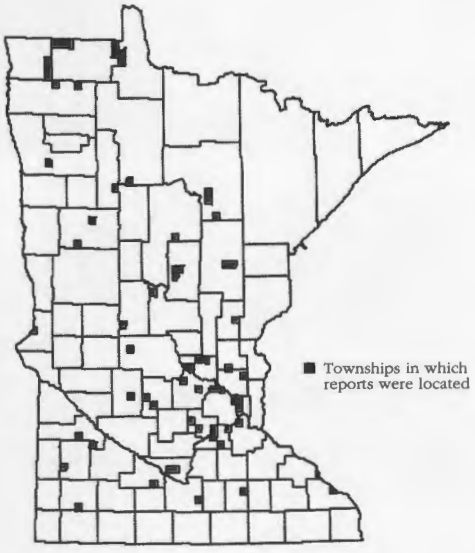

Figure 3. Distribution of confirmed Black Tern nesting reports, by township.

sightings, but without confirmation of nesting. For this purpose, reports were considered to confirm nesting if the observer reported seeing either an occupied nest or fledglings. Particularly valuable unpublished sources of recent breeding observations for Minnesota included Faber (1990, 1992), Moen (1991), Brewer (1992), Kautz (1992), and Maxson (1994).

Results

DNR staff compiled a total of 466 reports of Black Tern sightings generated between 1990 and 1995 by researchers, federal, state, and local agency personnel, and the general public in Minnesota. Of these, 403 (86%) were generated in response to the "wanted" poster appeal, and the remaining 63 (14%) were obtained from other sources or activities. Excluding 12 duplicate reports, 454 different locations of Black Tern sightings were identified in these reports. These locations are distributed among 321 (12%) of Minnesota's 2,594 townships (Figure 2) and fall within 71 (82%) of Minnesota's 87 counties. Among the reports compiled were 66 confirmed reports of nesting Black Terns, identifying 63 unique locations. These nesting locations were distributed among 66 (3%) of the state's townships and 35 (40%) of the state's counties (Figure 3).

Discussion

The "wanted" poster strategy employed in this project was successful in generating Black Tern sighting reports from around the state, and in educating the public and stimulating interest in the species. Although interpretation of the compiled reports is somewhat limited by a sampling bias (i.e. reports are more likely to be received from areas with more potential observers), the results do provide valuable information on the distribution of Black Terns in Minnesota. Considering that the vast majority of non-nesting observations were made during the late May to late July nesting season (J. Hines, pers. obs.) and that Black Terns tend to forage near their nests (Cuthbert 1954), it is likely that many of the birds observed in the air were in the vicinity of

Area of Analysis	Period of Analysis		
	1966–1994	1966–1979	1980–1994
Minnesota			
Change per year	-5.3%	-5.8%	-3.0
number of routes	33	23	24
statistical significance	**	*	ns
Upper Midwest			
Change per year	-5.4%	-5.0%	-1.7
number of routes	68	54	40
statistical significance	***	**	ns
U.S. and Canada			
Change per year	-2.1%	-7.6%	0.1
number of routes	270	172	40
statistical significance	ns	***	ns

Table 1. Breeding Bird Survey data for the Black Tern (Sauer *et al.*, 1996), (statistical significance: ns= not significant; * = P<0.10; ** = P<0.05; *** = P<0.01).

nesting sites. Consequently, outside of areas subject to a strong sampling bias, the concentration (or lack thereof) of townships in which reports were located can be assumed to reflect the true relative abundance of nesting Black Terns.

For example, with the exception of a small concentration of general reports around the upper Minnesota River in Big Stone and Lac Qui Parle counties (Figure 2), the agricultural regions of southern and western Minnesota contain relatively few townships in which reports were located. These regions have lost over 90% of the wetland area present prior to European settlement (Tester 1995), and little appropriate habitat for Black Terns remains. Similarly, few reports were received from the mostly forested northeastern portion of the state. In contrast, two concentrations of general reports (Figure 2; the band running through Becker, Otter Tail, Douglas, Kandiyohi, and Meeker counties, and the cluster around Beltrami, Itasca, Cass, Aitkin, and Crow Wing counties) are clearly coincident with regions of abundant lakes and wetlands. On the other hand, the clustering of reports (both general and nesting) around the Twin Cities metropolitan area (Figures 2 and 3) probably reflects the sampling bias discussed above.

The effort necessary to confirm nesting at a location undoubtedly reduced the number of nesting reports received through this project's opportunistic strategy of data acquisition. Consequently, it is not surprising that the compilation did not show concentrations of breeding records in those regions where general reports were clustered (Figures 2 and 3); however, it is likely that intensive surveys for Black Tern nests would be particularly fruitful in those areas with many general reports.

Prior to the compilation presented here, the best data on the breeding distribution of the Black Tern in Minnesota were provided by Janssen (1987). He reported that the summer range of the Black Tern is "...throughout most of the state where suitable marsh habitat exists. The exceptions are the northeast where it is not known to breed in large portions of the St. Louis and Koochiching counties; it does not occur in Lake and Cook counties..." Our results compare favorably with this description. Janssen's breeding range map indicates that he had compiled documentation of Black Tern nesting for 30 counties since between 1970 and 1987. In contrast, we document nesting in 35 counties, of which 17 were among the 30 in Janssen's map, and 18

were not included by Janssen. No clear pattern is discernible regarding the differences in breeding distribution reflected in these two data sets, although our data show fewer nesting records from counties in the agricultural region (southern and western Minnesota), and more in counties within the regions of more lakes and wetlands (northern and central Minnesota). More data are needed to determine if these differences are real.

Black Terns appear to remain well-distributed throughout those regions in Minnesota where appropriate habitat exists. Although BBS data (Table 1) indicate that the species experienced a significant decline within Minnesota, Upper Midwest, and North America during the period of 1966–1979, data from the period of 1980–1994 show no such decline. It may be that population levels of this species have stabilized, but continued monitoring will be necessary to verify this conclusion. Certainly, stabilization of Minnesota's Black Tern population depends upon the protection and conservation of wetlands throughout the state.

If future BBS data indicate a renewed decline in Black Tern populations, it may be necessary to initiate a monitoring program for the species. Such a program could be based upon a stratified random sample of those areas of the state in which this report indicates that significant populations of Black Terns are likely to be found.

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Minnestta D.N.R., 500 Lafayette Rd, St. Paul, MN 55155.

Great Gray Owl, 9 February 1996, near Grant Township, Washington County. Photo by Anthony Hertzel.

The Winter Season
1 December 1995 to 29 February 1996

Karl Bardon

This season's record low temperatures, record snowfall, and record number of Great Gray and Boreal Owls were in sharp contrast to last winter's record tally of species during very mild weather.

Inevitably, any discussion of the bird life in Minnesota during the winter 1995–96 season will center around the weather. Although December temperatures were above average in southern Minnesota, especially in the southwest where it was 3.5°F above normal for the month. January temperatures were cold statewide, with all cities reporting 1.6 – 7.8°F below normal, and the statewide average was 4.3°F below normal. A major storm on 17–19 January brought up to 18

inches of snow in northern Minnesota, an inch and a half of freezing rain in southern Minnesota, and blizzard conditions in western Minnesota. This storm and an additional snow storm on 28 January resulted in day after day of below zero temperatures throughout the state, culminating on 2 February when the state's new all-time record low of -60°F was set at Tower. Snowfall was above average throughout the state, especially in northern Minnesota where record season totals through April 1996 were measured, including over 111 inches at International Falls, over 132 inches at Duluth, and 170 inches at Caribou Trail, the latter a new state seasonal snowfall record.

The deep snow, ice storms, and frequent freezing and thawing created nearly impossible conditions for foraging Great Gray and Boreal Owls in northern Minnesota. As a result, both species were reported in record numbers; unfortunately, an unusual number of these birds were found dead or else were injured trying to break through the thick crust. A total of 171 dead Boreal Owls was reported to Steve Wilson, far surpassing the total of over 100 found dead during the 1988–89 invasion (***The Loon*** 61:132). Although the total number of Great Gray Owls have not yet been compiled, it will clearly exceed the record of 218 individuals reported during the 1991–92 invasion (***The Loon*** 64:189–195). An unprecedented number of Great Gray Owls was reported in southern Minnesota, especially in the Twin Cities area, where observers could easily locate any number of different individuals. A complete summary of the Great Gray and Boreal Owl invasions will be published in a future issue of ***The Loon***.

As usual during invasions of northern owls, a number of predators were reported in above average or even record numbers this season. The number of Barred Owls reported was the most since the 1983–84 invasion of Great Gray Owls, and many Barred Owls could be found hunting during daylight hours; hopefully the reports of Great Gray Owls in southern Minnesota include a minimum of identification errors. Although not reported in record numbers, both Snowy and Northern Hawk Owls were reported in numbers well above average. These two species are not as dependent on small mammals as Great Gray and Boreal Owls, and can more easily shift to other prey items. Northern Saw-whet Owls were reported in record numbers this season, but only two individuals were reported dead; although this species is also dependent on small mammals, its more southerly wintering distribution no doubt prevented more from starving. Northern Shrikes were also reported in record numbers this season, as they were during the 1991–92 Great Gray Owl invasion. Other northern raptors, such as Gyrfalcon, Rough-legged Hawk, and Northern Goshawk were not reported in above average numbers, but the comparative lack of northern reports of Rough-legged Hawks suggests this species moved south in numbers as well.

Northern owls were not the only birds negatively impacted by the unusual weather. An ice storm in southern Minnesota on 18–19 January apparently decimated some local bird populations. Over an inch of solid ice coated the entire landscape in the Twin Cities and southward, and subsequent subzero temperatures locked this icy grip on many areas for as long as two weeks. As an example, Fred Eckhardt of Boyd, Lac qui Parle County reported more birds killed than he has seen in 55 years, including woodpeckers, Blue Jays, White-breasted Nuthatches, Black-capped Chickadees, Dark-eyed Juncos, and House Sparrows. Other similar reports were received, but the full extent of such a die-off will probably remain unknown.

In addition, many species which often overwinter in Minnesota in small numbers were almost entirely absent by February, and presumably very few individuals of these species overwintered. Most notable among these species were Cooper's Hawk, Northern Goshawk,

Short-eared Owl, Long-eared Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Varied Thrush, Swamp Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Rusty Blackbird, and Common Grackle. Most of these species are at the northern limit of their wintering range in Minnesota. Hopefully, most individuals of these species that were reported in December and early January were able to vacate the state rather than succumb to the severe cold later in the season. Many other additional species were recorded only in December or January, but most of these are species which do not normally overwinter in Minnesota.

Better news was the discovery of eight species of gull at Black Dog Lake, Dakota County on 1 December, including a first state record Glaucous-winged Gull which had been present since the fall season. Also, a first-winter Black-legged Kittiwake which was only the second local record, a second-winter Iceland Gull, and an adult Lesser Black-backed Gull were recorded. Eight species of gulls have not been seen at one location at one time in Minnesota since 1988, when a similar concentration of gulls occurred at Black Dog Lake (***The Loon*** 61:3–4). For the first winter in five years, a Great Black-backed Gull was not reported from Duluth.

Despite the severe cold earlier in the month, a warming trend in late February brought an early movement of waterfowl into southern Minnesota. Most reports were clustered around 24–25 February when temperatures soared into the 50s. Greater White-fronted Goose, Snow Goose, Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, American Wigeon, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, and Ruddy Duck were all reported as migrants within the earliest dates on file for each species. The Pied-billed Grebe and Killdeer also reported during this time period were earlier than normal.

Also of interest is the large number of species that was reported in a record number of counties this season. Some of these species, such as Hairy Woodpecker, Common Raven, and Red-breasted Nuthatch could have been induced by weather or food shortages to winter in numbers farther south than normal (where there are more observers). It is difficult to explain, however, why such diverse species as Mallard, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Golden Eagle, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Mourning Dove, Brown Creeper, and White-throated Sparrow were all reported in a record number of counties, since Minnesota lies at the northern limit of these species' wintering ranges. More than likely, the record number of seasonal reports and Christmas Bird Counts were at least partly responsible for this increased coverage.

This report summarizes information from over 100 seasonal contributors and 50 Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs), which are notable increases from the previous few years. A healthy 148 species were recorded this season, including 128 species and 274,857 individuals counted on the CBCs. Although all CBC data is incorporated into this report, only the most noteworthy information is included, and when CBC sightings overlap with other reports, they are not mentioned. For the first time in four years, a tabular summary of the CBCs taken this season is included, a practice which began in 1983 when the CBCs were first closely incorporated into these seasonal reports. For a complete listing of all CBC data, readers are referred to the National Audubon Society's *Aububon Field Notes*, where this information is published.

Acknowledgments: I would like to thank Peder Svingen, editor of the Seasonal Reports, Dennis Martin, co-editor of the Christmas Bird Counts, and Kim Eckert and Anthony Hertzel, operators of the statewide hotlines, who all helped with the preparation of this report. I would also like to thank Steve Wilson, who provided invaluable data on the number of Boreal Owls turned in dead throughout the state.

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.

Loons to Swans

Common Loon
Late migrant reported **12/16** Lake DV.

Pied-billed Grebe
Late migrant reported on the St. Paul CBC and an early migrant reported **2/26** Dakota RJ (second earliest date on record).

Red-necked Grebe
Two individuals seen on the Duluth CBC.

American White Pelican
Two individuals overwintered at Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co., and three individuals were recorded on the Albert Lea CBC.

Double-crested Cormorant
Lingering bird at Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co. recorded on the Bloomington CBC.

Great Blue Heron
Overwintered at the Pigs Eye Lake outlet into the Mississippi River, St. Paul, Ramsey Co. where a peak of **20** was counted on 12/27 KB. Twelve individuals still present on 2/29. Also reported through mid-January in six other south counties, plus 12/6 Becker BBe in the north.

Tundra Swan
One adult overwintered with Trumpeter Swans at Monticello, Wright County KB. Late migrants reported 12/1 from Dakota County DBS and 12/1–6 Winona County CS. Many additional swans were reported as Tundras but no details were submitted, including 1/7 Winona County FL, 2/10 Wabasha County EMF, 2/26 Wabasha County OR, and the Lac Qui Parle and Rochester (2) CBCs. Reports of Tundra Swans in mid-winter should include details to preclude the more likely Trumpeter Swan.

[Trumpeter Swan]
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' surveys indicate **165–175** overwintered at Monticello, Sherburne/Wright counties and **80–90** overwintered at Fergus Falls, Otter Tail County (***The Loon*** 68:81–85). Also recorded 12/1 Hennepin (5) RJ, 12/25–1/15 Wabasha (3) CS, PKL, FL, 2/13 Becker (8) BBe, 2/19–21 Dakota (2) PJ, and on the Excelsior (1) and Wild River (3) CBCs.

[Mute Swan]
Two individuals of questionable origin reported near Faribault, Rice County

Waterfowl

Greater White-fronted Goose
Late migrant reported 12/9 Kandiyohi RF and earliest migrants on record reported **2/25** Martin (3) BBo.

Snow Goose
Single individuals overwintered in Dakota and St. Louis counties; also may have wintered in Rice and Olmsted. Early migrants reported **2/24** Kandiyohi RJF and **2/25** Martin (8) BBo; these are two of the earliest dates on record.

Canada Goose
Reported from 44 counties throughout the state. Thousands noted moving south 1/2 Lac Qui Parle FE. CBC total 98,609, of which 50,000 were on the Lac Qui Parle CBC and 27,000 on the Rochester CBC.

Wood Duck
Reported from 11 south counties, most of which probably overwintered. Peak of eight on the Faribault-Northfield CBC. Also reported 2/13 Becker BBe in the north.

Green-winged Teal
Over 20 overwintered at Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co. PJ. Also noted on the Grand Marais and Faribault-Northfield CBCs. May also have overwintered at the latter location since reported again 2/24 Rice JL, FKS.

American Black Duck
Reported from 13 eastern counties. CBC total 110, half (55) of which were on the Grand Marais CBC.

Mallard
Reported from a record **51** counties. CBC total a record **33,049** individuals, with 12,468 on the St. Paul CBC.

Northern Pintail
Record **12** reports from ten counties. Male overwintered at Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co. mob and a female overwintered in Clay DW. Over seven reports of early migrants beginning **2/19** Rock ND (ties earliest date on record) and **2/21** Cottonwood ED.

Blue-winged Teal
Apparently injured bird recorded on the Morris CBC. First winter record since 1987.

Northern Shoveler
Late migrant reported 12/7 Scott SC, and early migrant reported **2/29** Murray RSc. Also seen on the St. Paul CBC.

Gadwall
Overwintered in Dakota, Scott, Mower and Winona. Also recorded on the Willmar and Wabasha CBCs. Early migrants noted in Murray, Cottonwood and Rice beginning 2/24.

American Wigeon
Lingering bird reported until 12/16 Hennepin mob and on the Bloomington CBC (possibly same bird?). A record number of early migrants reported **2/24–25** in Cottonwood, Martin, Rice, Olmsted and Winona.

Canvasback
Late migrants reported 12/7 Scott SC and on the Fergus Falls CBC. Early migrants reported **2/25** Dakota PJ, RG (tie with second earliest date on record).

Redhead
Overwintered in Otter Tail, and may also have wintered in Dakota (one female) and LeSueur (reported 1/4–21 PKL, OR). Early migrants noted **2/25** Dakota RG, PJ (two females) and 2/29 Murray RSc.

Ring-necked Duck
Late migrants noted on the St. Paul and Willmar CBCs, and early migrants noted **2/25** Dakota PJ, RG and Wabasha JSt (second earliest date on record). The report 1/29–2/1 Goodhue DBS probably overwintered.

Lesser Scaup
Reported from 13 south counties, but only two north reports where reported overwintering in Otter Tail and seen 12/30 St. Louis (Virginia) KB. Numerous reports of returning migrants beginning 2/23 Cottonwood ED.

Harlequin Duck
Reported until 1/13 at Two Harbors, Lake Co. mob where a maximum of four seen

on 12/1 DV. A female was reported on 2/7 along the Rainy River at Ranier, **Koochiching** Co. PKL.

Oldsquaw
A remarkable **348** were counted on the Grand Marais CBC. Also reported away from Lake Superior 12/9 Washington BL and 12/12 Ramsey KB.

White-winged Scoter
Unusual mid-winter record **1/2–6** Lake CM *et al.*

Common Goldeneye
Reported from 34 counties throughout the state, but the only reports in the southwest were of early migrants in late February. Peak of 2500 on 2/6 at Monticello, Wright Co. KB.

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE
Adult male overwintered at Blue Lake treatment plant, Scott Co. CMa, mob (***The Loon*** 68:130–131).

Bufflehead
Three females overwintered in Scott County. Also reported 12/6 Winona CS, 1/2 Rice FKS, until 1/11 Wright KB, and on Lake Superior in St. Louis, Lake and Cook.

Hooded Merganser
Over ten reports including overwintering in Ramsey, Scott, Dakota, Wright and Mower, plus north reports on the Tamarac NWR and Fergus Falls CBCs, and 12/30 St. Louis (Virginia) KB.

Common Merganser
Reported from 23 counties in all regions except the northwest. Reports in the southwest were late February migrants, and reports in the west-central were December migrants. Early influx noted 2/6 Ramsey Co. (300) and 2/9 Dakota Co. (800) KB.

Red-breasted Merganser
Only reports from Lake Superior in Cook and St. Louis.

Ruddy Duck
Overwintered in Otter Tail SDM (only the second overwintering record for the state), and reported until **1/1** in Scott mob and Olmsted JSt. An early migrant noted **2/25** Dakota PJ (second earliest migrant on record).

Vultures to Falcons

Bald Eagle
Reported from a record **50** counties throughout the state. CBC total 174.

Northern Harrier
Above average number of reports. Eleven individuals reported from nine counties as far north as Pine.

Sharp-shinned Hawk
Reported from a record **31** counties throughout the state including many north reports (7 counties). Reports distributed fairly evenly among the three months. CBC total 32.

Cooper's Hawk
Reported from a record **12** counties; only north report in Todd. Most reports were in December. CBC total eight.

Northern Goshawk
Reported from 16 counties; only south reports were 12/10 Washington TEB and the Lac Qui Parle, Excelsior, and St. Paul CBCs. Most reports were in December (only one February observation reported). CBC total only six.

Red-shouldered Hawk
About 14 individuals reported from 7 counties south and east of Anoka, plus 12/22–29 Otter Tail CM. Overwintered in Anoka and Hennepin; other observations were as late as early January.

Red-tailed Hawk
Reported from 35 south counties, plus Kanabec, Todd, Becker and St. Louis in the north. CBC total 408 (record 536 l.y.).

Rough-legged Hawk
Reported from 28 south counties, plus

Wilkin, Morrison, Kandiyohi, Aitkin and Cook in the north. Majority of observations were in either December or the latter half of February; mid-winter observations noted in Renville, Brown, Goodhue, Houston, Winona, and Rice. There were no St. Louis reports after record numbers found there last year. CBC total 64 (249 l.y.)

Golden Eagle
A record thirteen individuals. As many as eight were reported in southeast region wintering area in Wabasha, Winona and Houston. Also reported 12/30 Roseau PS, 1/13 Renville KB, SC, 2/28 Renville CMa, and 2/29 Isanti AH.

American Kestrel
Reported from 41 counties as far north as Clay, Becker and St. Louis. CBC total 81.

Merlin
Eight individuals reported from five north and two south counties.

Prairie Falcon
Overwintered at the Minneapolis International Airport, Hennepin Co. mob.

Peregrine Falcon
Reintroduced birds overwintered at population centers in Ramsey, Hennepin, Washington and Olmsted.

GYRFALCON
An imm. gray morph reported 1/8–21 Duluth, St. Louis Co. DEv, mob, and an adult gray morph showed up in the Duluth harbor on 1/17 and remained through March, mob. Also reported 1/3 Lake *fide* KE.

Partridges to Coots

Gray Partridge
Reported from 15 counties (6 l.y.) in the south and west. CBC total 98 (15 l.y.). Increase after record low numbers last year.

Ring-necked Pheasant
Reported from 53 counties throughout range. CBC total 1,172.

Spruce Grouse
Reported from Lake of the Woods, St. Louis and Lake.

Ruffed Grouse
Reported from 27 counties in the north and east. CBC total a very low 46 (55 l.y.).

Greater Prairie-Chicken
Reported from Polk, Wilkin and 1/21 Becker BBe.

Sharp-tailed Grouse
Reported from eight counties in range (three l.y.). CBC total 52 (only one l.y.). Although number of counties reported is up sharply after three years of decline, this may only be due to increased observer coverage and possibly greater snow cover (forcing birds onto roadsides).

Wild Turkey
Reported from 20 south counties. CBC total 628 with 243 individuals counted on the Wabasha CBC.

American Coot
Overwintered in Scott, Dakota, and Winona. Also reported on the Fergus Falls and St. Paul CBCs.

Shorebirds to Gulls

Killdeer
Early migrant noted **2/25** Houston JSt (tie for third earliest date on record).

Common Snipe
Probably overwintered in Rice. Also reported 12/17 Hennepin SC, and on the St. Paul (northeast suburban), Austin and La Crosse CBCs.

Ring-billed Gull
Migrants lingered until 12/27 Dakota KB. Early migrants noted **2/23** Dakota PJ and **2/24** Wabasha BF.

Herring Gull
Present along Lake Superior in December and January but by early February these

birds were almost entirely gone. Peak of 3,000–4,000 noted on 12/2 at Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co. BF, and last reported in Twin Cities on 1/2 Dakota KB. Early migrant noted 2/23 Winona CS.

Thayer's Gull
Peak of five on 12/4 Dakota KB, and last reported in Twin Cities on 1/2 Ramsey KB. On Lake Superior, reported on the Grand Marais CBC, and 1/14 St.Louis KE.

ICELAND GULL
A second-winter individual reported 12/1 Dakota BF (***The Loon*** 67:252–253), and a first-winter individual reported 12/2 Dakota KB (***The Loon*** 68:59).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL
Adult from fall season remained until 12/7 Dakota SC, mob.

GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULL
The adult from fall season was last reported on 12/24 at Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co. mob. First state record (***The Loon*** 68:3–13).

Glaucous Gull
Reported as usual in Twin Cities area with a peak of three on 12/2 Dakota mob and last seen 12/12 Ramsey KB. Also reported along the Mississippi River in southeast region on 12/2 Goodhue DZ and 12/4 Winona CS. Peak of ten on Lake Superior, St. Louis Co. KE.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE
First-winter individual reported 12/1–2 at Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co. BF, mob (***The Loon*** 67:248–249, 68:71–73).

Doves to Kingfishers

Rock Dove
Reported from 81 counties throughout the state. CBC total 13,586.

Mourning Dove
Reported from a record **42** counties (36 ly.) throughout the state. CBC total an above average 1,035 (record 1,162 l.y.), including 249 on the Wabasha CBC.

Northern Hawk Owl, 23 December 1995, Duluth, St. Louis County. Photo by Craig Menze.

Eastern Screech-Owl
Reported from 13 counties as far north and west as Clay. CBC total 26.

Great Horned Owl
Reported from 37 counties throughout the state. CBC total 88.

Snowy Owl
Over 50 individuals reported from 24 counties throughout the state, with the south and west regions well-represented,; relatively few reports from the northeast.

Northern Hawk Owl
Over 30 individuals reported from 13 counties as far south as Pine and as far west as Kittson.

Barred Owl
Reported from 30 counties in range, the most since 1983–84. CBC total an above average 43.

Great Gray Owl
Record invasion; reported from 31 coun-

Boreal Owl, 3 February 1996, Carpenter Nature Center, Washington County. Photo by Anthony Hertzel.

ties, including many south reports in the greater metro area and as far south as **Houston**, **Mower**, **Dodge**, **Olmsted**, **Freeborn** and **Wabasha** in the southeast. CBC total of 42 includes an all-time North America record **28** found on the Sax-Zim CBC.

Long-eared Owl
Ten individuals reported from Clay, Wilkin, Rock, Dakota and Washington. Above average number of reports, but many less than the 49 individuals reported last year. No February reports.

Short-eared Owl
Eleven individuals reported from Rock, Wilkin, Clay and Washington. Most since 1987 incursion in Wilkin Co. (***The Loon*** 59:157–58). No February reports.

Boreal Owl
Record Invasion. Steve Wilson reports that **171** were found dead through spring 1996, mostly in the northeastern part of the state; this total does not include some individuals reported by other observers. Reported from **21** counties as far west as Roseau and Becker counties, and as far south as **Kandiyohi**, **Sherburne**, **Hennepin**, **Anoka**, **Isanti**, **Chisago** and **Washington**.

Northern Saw-whet Owl
Number of reports continues to increase. A record 16 individuals reported from ten counties in all regions of the state except the southwest. Overwintering noted in Rice. Most other reports were in December, but there was an increase in north reports in late February.

Woodpeckers to Larks

Belted Kingfisher
Reported from 19 south counties. Only north reports were in Otter Tail SDM and on the Duluth CBC. Only individuals noted overwintering were in Otter Tail, Hennepin, and Winona. CBC total 24.

Red-headed Woodpecker
Reported from 13 south counties. Only report of overwintering was in Anoka. CBC total 33.

Red-bellied Woodpecker
Reported from a record **49** counties (37 l.y.) throughout the state as far northwest as Pennington and Marshall. CBC total a record **498** (445 l.y.).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Same individual reported 12/17–23 Hennepin SC, TT and on the Bloomington CBC. One also reported on the Winona CBC.

Downy Woodpecker
Reported from 65 counties (58 l.y.) throughout the state. CBC total a record **2,142** (1,812 l.y.).

Hairy Woodpecker
Reported from a record **68** counties (51 l.y.) throughout the state. CBC total an average 1,112 (891 l.y.).

Three-toed Woodpecker
Only reports from Lake mob and the International Falls and Grand Marais CBCs.

Black-backed Woodpecker
Eleven individuals reported from Beltrami, Crow Wing, Aitkin, St. Louis and Lake.

Northern Flicker
Reported from 20 south counties plus north reports on the Detroit Lakes (3) and International Falls (1) CBCs, and 12/24 Wilkin (3) SDM. None reported overwintering. CBC total 31.

Pileated Woodpecker
Reported from 52 counties throughout the state. CBC total 235.

Horned Lark
Reported from 54 counties as far north and west as Red Lake. Migrants noted 2/17 Becker (300+), 2/24 Big Stone (600–700) and 2/28 Redwood (100s). CBC total 499.

Jays to Kinglets

Gray Jay
Above average numbers. Reported from 13 counties in range as far south as Kanabec. CBC total 268.

Blue Jay
Reported from 74 counties throughout the state. CBC total 5,185.

Black-billed Magpie
Reported from 13 counties in range. CBC total 69.

American Crow
Reported from 79 counties throughout the state. CBC total 10,178.

Common Raven
Reported from a record **25** counties (17 l.y.) including south reports from Isanti, Anoka and Chisago. CBC total an above average 975 (582 l.y.).

Black-capped Chickadee
Reported from 72 counties throughout the state. CBC total a record **15,733** (11,410 l.y.), with a record high count of **2,396** on the Duluth CBC.

Boreal Chickadee
Reported from only six counties in range. CBC total 21.

Tufted Titmouse
Reported from Olmsted, Winona and Houston.

Red-breasted Nuthatch
Reported from a record **59** counties throughout the state. There was a notable incursion into southern regions. CBC total an above average 860, with 68 on the Rochester CBC and 62 on the St. Paul (northeast suburban) CBC.

Bohemian Waxwings, 30 December 1995, Karlstad, Kittson County. Photo by Peder Svingen.

White-breasted Nuthatch
Reported from 64 counties throughout the state. CBC total 2,850, with 270 on the St. Paul (northeast suburban) CBC.

Brown Creeper
Reported from a record **39** counties in all regions of the state. Numbers higher than usual. CBC total an above average 192.

Carolina Wren
Reported at a feeder 12/6–1/28 Dakota JCC (***The Loon*** 68:70).

Winter Wren
Reported 12/21–1/12 Washington TEB.

Golden-crowned Kinglet
Reported from a below average eight counties in all regions; the only report after early January was until 2/3 Aitkin WN.

Bluebirds to Thrashers

Eastern Bluebird
Overwintered in Winona CS, and also reported 12/1 Wabasha CS and on the St. Paul (northeast suburban) and Rochester (5) CBCs.

Townsend's Solitaire
Two unusual southeast reports: 1/19–20 Houston (2) mob and 1/24 Winona (2) CS.

Hermit Thrush
Reported 12/7 Rice TBo, 1/16 Hennepin *fide* AH and 1/10–25 Ramsey *fide* AH.

American Robin
Reported from 28 counties throughout the state. CBC total 210.

Varied Thrush
Reports of only five individuals after last year's invasion. Seen until 12/3 Crow Wing *fide* PP, beginning 12/11 Ramsey *fide* AH, 12/26–2/1 Beltrami DJ, 1/1 Rice OR and 1/5 Cook counties SOL (specimen).

Brown Thrasher
Six individuals (above average); reported

12/14 Lake DV, 1/3 Dakota RG, mid-January Wright *fide* AH, until 2/1 Beltrami DJo, and on the Duluth and Hastings-Etter CBCs.

Waxwings to Warblers

Bohemian Waxwing
Reported from 15 north counties plus south reports on the Sherbune NWR and St. Paul (northeast suburban) CBCs. CBC total a low 710.

Cedar Waxwing
Reported from 26 south and 5 north counties. CBC total 1,442.

Northern Shrike
Record invasion; reported from a record **64** counties (51 l.y.) throughout the state. CBC total a record **146** individuals (101 l.y.). Compilation of total number of individuals probably not possible, but PKL alone reported 40 individuals from 12 counties.

European Starling
Reported from 76 counties throughout the state. CBC total 16,869.

Yellow-rumped Warbler
Reported 12/1 Lake (2) DV and until 12/22 Ramsey *fide* AH.

Cardinals to Snow Bunting

Northern Cardinal
Reported from an above average 46 counties throughout the state including overwintering as far northwest as Pennington and Roseau. CBC total 1,940, including a high count of 340 on the St. Paul (northeast suburban) CBC.

Eastern Towhee
Overwintered at a feeder in Roseville, Ramsey Co. JDa. Also reported on the St. Paul (northeast suburban) CBC.

towhee, sp.
Individuals reported without details in Dakota and Stevens *fide* AH, and on the Morris and Winona CBCs. Towhees reported in winter in Minnesota should include details to determine whether they are Spotted or Eastern Towhees.

American Tree Sparrow
Reported from 38 south and 6 north counties as far north as Clay, Becker and Aitkin. CBC total 3,486.

Chipping Sparrow
Reported on 12/4 at Hoyt Lakes, St. Louis Co. NJ.

Savannah Sparrow
Overwintered at a feeder in Hennepin OJ, mob. Same individual reported on the Minneapolis (north) CBC. Second winter record for Minnesota (***The Loon*** 68:128), and the first to overwinter.

Fox Sparrow
Reported 12/22 Hennepin Co. SC, 1/3 Cottonwood ED, and on the Grand Marais CBC.

Song Sparrow
Reported from 12 south counties plus 12/17 Otter Tail SDM and the Duluth CBC in the north. A peak of **12** noted 12/17–1/21 in the Minnesota River bottoms, Hennepin County SC. there were no February reports.

Swamp Sparrow
Five to six individuals reported 12/17–1/21 along the Minnesota River bottoms, Hennepin Co. SC. Also recorded on the Rochester CBC.

White-throated Sparrow
Reported from 15 counties throughout the state, with remarkable numbers noted on the Duluth (13) and Rochester (**22**) CBCs. CBC total a record **59**.

White-crowned Sparrow
Reported until 12/15 St. Louis (Cotton) *fide* KE, and on the International Falls, Grand Marais and Faribault-Northfield CBCs.

Harris' Sparrow
Reported until 1/6 St. Louis County KE.

Northern Cardinal, 2 February 1996 at temperature of -55°F, Roseau, Roseau County.

Also reported in Dodge County (no date) THF, and on the Marshall, Fargo-Moorhead and the Faribault-Northfield CBCs.

Dark-eyed Junco
Reported from 54 counties throughout the state. CBC total an above average 7,537.

Lapland Longspur
Reported from 19 counties in all regions of the state except the northwest including several unusual northeast reports: 12/10 Lake DV and on the Duluth and Sax-Zim CBCs. Migration of many flocks averaging 20–50 birds was noted on 2/17 Watonwan CG/BS. CBC total 74.

Snow Bunting
Reported from 55 counties throughout the state. Appeared to be most common in the southeast and south-central regions (300–800 birds). CBC total a below average 4,482, with a high count of 800 on the Albert Lea CBC.

Blackbirds to Weaver Finches

Red-winged Blackbird
Reported from 14 south counties plus 1/3 Wilkin County (3) SDM and the Hibbing CBC in the north. Three February reports of flocks from 8 to more than 50 birds suggesting an early influx. CBC total 133.

Eastern Meadowlark
Vocalizing individuals identified 12/2 Dakota County PBu and 12/8 Winona County CS.

meadowlark, sp.
Reported 12/10 Wabasha (2) CS, 12/21 Rice TBo and on the Crookston and Detroit Lakes CBCs.

Rusty Blackbird
Reported from 11 counties throughout all parts of the state. All reports were in December.

Brewer's Blackbird
Reported until 2/2 Todd JSK and on the Mountain Lake-Windom and Wild River CBCs.

Common Grackle
Reported from 31 counties throughout the state. Only one February report. CBC total 107.

Brown-headed Cowbird
Noted 1/25 Winona CS and on the Albert Lea (1) and Austin (10) CBCs.

Pine Grosbeak
Reported from 15 north counties. CBC total 1,444.

Purple Finch
Numbers down. Reported from 32 counties throughout the state. CBC total 300 (601 l.y.).

House Finch
Numbers continue to increase. Reported from a record **41** counties (36 l.y.) throughout the state. CBC total a record **2,478** (2,118 l.y.).

Red Crossbill
Reported from eight counties in the north plus Anoka County in the south. CBC total 55.

White-winged Crossbill
Above average numbers reported. Reported from 17 counties in the north and 10 counties in the south; reported as far south as Brown and Rice counties. Large numbers noted on the Roseau (128) and Fergus Falls (114) CBCs, and 400+ counted on 1/7 Aitkin WN. CBC total 378.

Common Redpoll
Reported from an above average 65 counties throughout the state. CBC total an above average 7,490.

Hoary Redpoll
About 28 individuals were reported from 13 counties in the north. Also reported 2/11 Carver Co. DBM, 2/12 Lyon Co. RSc and on the Cottonwood CBC. Largest

Hoary Redpoll (left) with Common Redpolls, 1 January 1996, Mora, Kanabec County. Photo by Craig Menze. Note the smaller bill on the Hoary.

group reported only three individuals. As usual, most reports were not documented.

Pine Siskin
Reported from 50 counties throughout the state. CBC total 3,844.

American Goldfinch
Reported from 48 counties throughout the state. CBC total 2,928.

Evening Grosbeak
Reported from 18 north counties plus Kandiyohi (no date) and the Wild River CBC in the south. CBC total 1,974.

House Sparrow
Reported from 77 counties throughout the state. CBC total 23,789.

Corrections to The Season

Fall Season 1995: Change **Horned Grebe**, early south 9/26 from St. Louis to Hennepin; Add **GROOVE-BILLED ANI**, seen 10/15 at the Lutsen sewage ponds, Cook County.

Add the following species to the Winter 1994–95 Season: one **Greater White-fronted Goose** seen 1/21 Hennepin SW, a **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE** reported on 2/26 at Lac Qui Parle WMA RSc, an **Osprey** and a **Black-crowned Night-Heron** reported on the St. Paul (northeast suburban) CBC, and a **GREEN-TAILED TOWHEE** reported on 12/18 at Ely, St. Louis Co. (***The Loon*** 68:58). These five species increase the record total of 157 species reported during the 1994–95 winter season (***The Loon*** 67:142) to **162** species! The previous record was 149 species reported during the 1992–93 winter season.

Christmas Bird Count Summary

Location	Date	Compiler	Number of Participants	Total Species	Total Individuals
Afton	1/1/96	Helen Lien	17	30*	4,830
Albert Lea	12/30/95	Elaine Feikema	19	47	10,847
Aurora	12/20/95	Chuck Neil	10	22	1,179
Austin	12/17/95	Terry W. Dorsey	11	43	4,485
Baudette	12/27/95	Martin Kehoe	8	23	842
Beltrami Island	12/28/95	Martin Kehoe	10	16	205
Bemidji	12/16/95	Katherine V. Haws	17	30	2,114
Bloomington	12/16/95	Mark Ochs	56	60	14,592
Carlton-Cloquet	12/17/95	Larry A. Weber	10	27	1,124
Cedar Creek Bog	12/17/95	Helen Lien	5	36	1,385
Cottonwood	12/16/95	Paul Egeland	5	36	1,708
Crookston	12/16/95	Tom Feiro	6	24	1,631
Crosby	12/16/95	Jo Blanich	15	32	1,720
Detroit Lakes	12/16/95	Betsy Beneke	12	32	2,478
Duluth	12/16/95	Kim Eckert	62	62	7,115
East Grand Forks	12/17/95	David O. Lambeth	19	14*	750
Excelsior	12/16/95	Dennis Martin	41	53	8,787
Fargo-Moorhead	12/16/95	Ron Nellermoe	23	35*	5,371
Faribault	12/16/95	Forest V. Strnad	20	45	6,348
Fergus Falls	12/16/95	Steve Millard	18	44	10,546
Fairmont	12/16/95	Brad Bolduan	13	31	4,892
Grand Marais	12/16/95	Ken Hoffman	39	43	2,921
Grand Rapids	12/16/95	Susan Hutchins	9	28	1,081
Hastings-Etter	12/30/95	Roger &Tammy Field	17	44*	5,267
Hibbing	1/1/96	Janet Peterson	10	17	528
International Falls	12/16/95	James Schaberl	6	31	1,059
Isabella	12/31/95	Steve Wilson	16	16	511
Itasca State Park	12/30/95	Doug Johnson	2	14	413
LaCrosse	12/16/95	Frederick Lesher	33	48*	9,345
Lac Qui Parle	12/23/95	Paul Egeland	7	43	51,933
Le Sueur County	12/23/95	Wally Swanson	3	29	1,788
Long Prairie	1/1/96	John & Susan Kroll	14	29	714
Mankato	12/16/95	Merril Frydendall	13	40	3,474
Marshall	12/18/95	Paul Egeland	6	38	1,980
Minneapolis North	12/16/95	Mary Ellen Vetter	30	36	4,373
Morris	12/16/95	Donna Rieckmann	6	33	1,993
Mt Lake-Windom	1/1/96	Edna Gerber	13	32	1,899
Owatonna	12/16/95	Darryl Hill	39	39	3,287
Rochester	12/16/95	David Squillace	22	54	34,687
Roseau	12/30/95	Betty Johnson	8	29	1,515
Sax-Zim	12/18/95	Mark Stensaas	27	28	1,226
Sherburne NWR	12/30/95	James Pasch	18	30	1,679
St. Paul	12/16/95	Fred Waltz	40	56	23,664
St. Paul NE	12/30/95	Gary W. Ash	39	52	8,896
Tamarac NWR	1/11/96	Lowell Deede	10	26	1,128
Wabasha	12/31/95	Jon Peterson	16	43	5,064
Warren	1/1/96	Gladwin Lynne	12	25	1,919
Wild River	12/16/95	Tom Anderson	18	37	3,615
Willmar	12/16/95	Ben Thoma	12	32	1,215
Winona	12/16/95	Walt Carroll	21	49	4,736

*Includes only Minnesota portion of count.

Contributors to The Season

BA	Betty Ammerman
KB	Karl Bardon
TEB	Tom & Elizabeth Bell
BBe	Betsy Beneke
PBi	Paul Binek
TBo	Tom Boevers
BBo	Brad Bolduan
AB	Al Bolduc
DBo	Don Bolduc
DBr	Diane Brudelie
PBu	Paul Budde
CB	Cindy Butler
SC	Steve Carlson
JCC	Jerry & Cathy Cassem
DCo	Donna Compton
JDa	Jeff Dankert
ND	Nelvina DeKam
ED	Ed Duerksen
JD	Joel Dunnette
KE	Kim Eckert
FE	Fred Eckhardt
LE	Lane Ellwanger
DEv	Dave Evans
ME	Molly Evans
AE	Audrey L. Evers
BF	Bruce Fall
THF	Tom & Helen Ferry
LF	Lawrence W. Filter
HJF	Herbert & Jeanette Fisher
TF	Troy Flicek
EMF	Eugene & Marilynn Ford
RJF	Randy & Jean Frederickson
MF	Merrill Frydendall
JF	J. S. Futcher
EG	Edna Gerber
RG	Ray Glassel
CG/BS	Cathy Graham & Blaine Seeliger
KH/JW	Kathy Heidel & Jo Ward
AH	Anthony Hertzel
KMH	Ken & Molly Hoffman
RH	Robert E. Holtz
JH	James L. Howitz
NJ	Nancy Jackson
RJ	Robert B. Janssen
PJ	Paul Jantscher
DJ	Douglas Jenness
DJo	Douglas P. Johnson
MJ/DT	Murdoch Johnson & Dianne Tuff
OJ	Oscar L. Johnson
BK	Byron Kinkade
RRK	Ron & Rose Kneeskern
JSK	John & Susan Kroll
CK	Chuck Krulas
PKL	Pat & Ken La Fond
FL	Fred Lesher
BL	Bill Litkey
JL	Jon Little
WL	William H. Longley
SOL	Sandy & Orvis Lunke
CMa	Craig Mandel
WM	William Marengo
DBM	Dennis & Barbara Martin
CM	Craig Menze
SDM	Steve & Diane Millard
SCM	Steve & Carol Mortensen
BM/CG	Bonnie Mulligan & Charlie Greenman
DN	David Neitzel
BN	Bill Nelson
WN	Warren Nelson
MN	Michael R. North
RO	Robert O'Connor
JP	Johanna Pals
PP	Pam Perry
DP	Daphne Peterson
KR	Kathryn A. Rivers
OR	Orwin A. Rustad
ESH	Eileen Schantz-Hansen
SS	Steven Schon
RSc	Roger Schroeder
CS	Carol Schumacher
JS	Julian Sellers
GS	Gary Simonson
DBS	Drew & Becky Smith
JSp	Jack Sprenger
JSt	Jeff Stephenson
SKS	Shelley & Keith Steva
FKS	Forest & Kirsten Strnad
PS	Peder Svingen
HT	Howard Towle
TT	Tom Tustison
DV	Dan Versaw
NW	Nick Wedge
SW	Steve Weston
KKW	Kristi & Kyle Wicklund
TW	Terry Wiens
DW	Dennis Wiesenborn
JW	Jim Williams
SW/MS	Steve Wilson & Mary Shedd
DZ	Dave Zumeta
mob	many observers

1995 Fall Raptor Migration Along the Mississippi River at Reno, Minnesota

Jeffrey B. Dankert
and
Frederick Z. Lesher

It is well known that the Mississippi River hosts a significant movement of raptors in the fall. Intensive raptor counts on the east side of the river at Eagle Valley Nature Preserve near Glen Haven, Wisconsin, in Grant County, have yielded some very impressive numbers for the Mississippi River Valley (Mandernack, pers. comm.). In 1994, 596 hours produced a total of 14,603 raptors. 1995 was more phenomenal at Eagle Valley, with 612 hours producing 30,690 raptors, including a total of 3,864 Bald Eagles. Raptors have also been counted on the west side of the river in Allamakee County, Iowa, near Effigy Mounds National Monument. From 1982-86, observers tallied 12,442 raptors in 209 days and 1,267 hours. The highest totals came from 1983 when 3,253 raptors were seen at a rate of 7.7 raptors per hour (Stravers *et al.*, 1987).

Lesher has been watching raptors on both sides of the river in the La Crosse, Wisconsin area since 1974, in both spring and fall. He first visited the site at Reno, Minnesota on 3 March 1974, while exploring new birding territories near La Crosse. He soon realized its potential as a raptor site, and has spent 10-30 hours annually, most years since 1974, counting raptors there. Most of Lesher's historical numbers are from September, including significant numbers of Sharp-shinned Hawks, Broad-winged Hawks, Peregrine Falcons and Ospreys. A single kettle of 225 Broad-winged Hawks was seen on 20 September 1987, and an impressive 37 Ospreys were counted during three hours on 15 September 1991.

Dankert joined Lesher at Reno, in part, in 1994 for seven days (22.5 hours) between 1 October and 28 October. We tallied 212 raptors, averaging 9.4 raptors per hour, including 78 Sharp-shinned Hawks and 44 Red-tailed Hawks. We also counted raptors on the east side of the river at Genoa Old Settlers Park, Wisconsin from 30 September to 14 October. We tallied 203 birds over 19.75 hours, averaging 10.3 raptors per hour, the majority of which were 73 Turkey Vultures and 67 Red-tailed Hawks.

Despite meager tallies on both sides of the river in 1994, our interest was piqued by the fall raptor movement at Reno. We resolved to increase our efforts for the 1995 fall flight at Reno, with intentions of more hours and more consistent coverage. The results of our fall 1995 efforts are largely the result of Dankert's raptor counting fanaticism, unwittingly nurtured by Lesher, who missed the bulk of the 1995 count because of major surgery. The results of our 1995 count are what we present here.

Study Area

The site is located on a bluff top near Reno, Minnesota, in Section 23 of Crooked Creek Township. It lies along the Mississippi River in Houston County, eight miles north of the Iowa border, and five miles south of Brownsville, Minnesota. It lies on a ridge of exposed limestone, the site of quarry activity decades ago, and is bordered to the immediate east by Minnesota Highway 26 and the Mississippi River. The site is in the Richard J. Dorer Memorial Hardwood State

Forest, public land managed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. It is accessed by traveling 1.5 miles north on Township Road 105, from its intersection with Minnesota Highway 26 at Reno, to a trail head on the right. This trail reaches an old quarry, and the ridge of rock remaining is where the raptor site is located. The authors refer to the site as Paradise Point.

The altitude at the bluff peak is approximately 1,100 feet and allows the visitor an unobstructed view to the north, east and west. The view to the east, over the river, is magnificent, with an almost 180 view of the river. The view to the west includes an adjacent valley and the upland farmland beyond. The mouth of the valley, or coulee, opens up to the Mississippi River valley to the immediate north, and a peak of similar height to the quarry peak can be seen just beyond this. Views to the south can be had by moving strategically between the scrubby cedar trees present. It is the unobstructed view to the north, east and west that we believe makes Paradise Point a worthwhile fall raptor counting site.

Methods

We visited the site as often as our schedules would allow, with weekends the most convenient dates for observation. Seven observers visited the site on 24 days from 29 August 1995 to 4 November 1995 for a total effort of 120 hours. Hours per day ranged from one to 10.75, with an average of five hours of effort per day. Fourteen days had one observer, seven days had two, two days had three, and one day had four observers. Dankert visited the site 20 days, Lesher visited the site eight days, and five other observers, in varying numbers, accompanied Dankert on five visits. Lesher conducted three counts from the upland farmland 0.5 miles northwest of the site.

Raptors were found and identified using 8X binoculars, while spotting scopes were seldom used. Numbers of raptors were recorded in hourly columns on forms from the Hawk Migration Association of North America, along with temperature, wind speed, wind direction, and cloud cover, which were taken from hourly broadcasts of the National Weather Service in La Crosse, Wisconsin. Because of limited personnel and a goal of having fun, we did not record raptor data such as sex, age, flight lanes, and flight altitude, which is often done at other raptor sites. We avoided counting birds that were not moving in a perceived southerly direction. When the numbers of raptors were too numerous to tally in the small boxes on the forms, Dankert used a separate sheet to compile the hourly totals, and these were transferred directly to the count form each hour. Unidentified birds were recorded as accipiters, buteos, falcons, eagles, or raptors.

Results

In 1995, 2,115 raptors of 13 species were detected at Reno. The data for all raptor species, including their relative abundance, are presented in Table 1.

Raptors per hour were calculated for each day, for each week, and for the season. The raptors-per-hour, on a per day and per week basis, were used to summarize the fall flight rate for total raptors (Figure 1 and 2). The highest daily rate was 55.6 raptors per hour on 1 October, and the low daily rate was 0.8 raptors per hour on 29 September. The highest weekly rate was 40.0 raptors per hour for week 10/1, and the lowest was 4.8 raptors per hour for week 8/27. The overall seasonal rate was 17.6 raptors per hour. The highest total raptor day occurred on 1 October when 500 birds were tallied, 295 of these Sharp-shinned Hawks. Other high raptor days were 16 September (268) and 2 October (225).

Discussion

More days spent in November and December would probably yield more Red-tailed Hawks, Bald Eagles, and Golden Eagles, plus detection of Rough-legged Hawks, and would probably give a more accurate seasonal peak. These species are late-season migrants, and may have been

SPECIES	TOTAL	PEAK DATE	%OF (NO.)	#DAYS SEEN TOTAL	RANGE OF DATES
Turkey Vulture	199	10/7 (81)	9.4	19	29 Aug - 21 Oct
Osprey	49	9/7 (23)	2.3	14	29 Aug - 21 Oct
Bald Eagle	129	11/4 (40)	6.1	19	2 Sep - 4 Nov
Northern Harrier	27	10/14 (6)	1.3	12	8 Sep - 3 Nov
Sharp-shinned Hawk	851	10/1 (295)	40.2	18	2 Sep - 21 Oct
Cooper's Hawk	68	10/1 (28)	3.2	13	8 Sep - 21 Oct
Red-shouldered Hawk	4	NO PEAK	0.2	4	1 Oct - 3 Nov
Broad-winged Hawk	183	9/16 (131)	8.7	10	5 Sep - 7 Oct
Red-tailed Hawk	347	10/21 (71)	16.4	20	2 Sep - 4 Nov
Golden Eagle	2	NO PEAK	0.1	2	22 Sep - 8 Oct
American Kestrel	14	NO PEAK	0.7	7	4 Sep - 2 Oct
Merlin	19	10/1 (9)	0.9	6	7 Sep - 21 Oct
Peregrine Falcon	12	10/2 (4)	0.6	6	16 Sep - 8 Oct
Unident. Accipiter	39	10/1 (26)	1.8		
Unident. Buteo	79	10/1 (16)	3.7		
Unident. Eagle	5	11/4 (4)	0.2		
Unident. Raptor	88	10/1 (39)	4.2		
TOTAL	2115				

Table 1. Raptor species summary, 1995 raptor count, Reno, Minnesota.

building up to their peak migration when we ended our count on 4 November. Although we did not keep separate tallies of adult and immature raptors, it would probably prove useful for Bald Eagles on future counts. In 1995, observers at Eagle Valley, 55 miles south of Reno, counted a total of 30 Golden Eagles (Mandernack, pers. comm.), and some of those probably passed Reno undetected.

It is also probable that two to three observers present each count day would yield higher numbers. On the three highest count days, Dankert was the only observer present, (it became very challenging for him to keep track of the birds on 1 October, the season's high total raptor day). On days of large flights, birds can fill the limits of the sky in all directions, especially when the winds are strong and favorable, and can be very difficult to identify and count for one observer.

More consistent coverage throughout the season is also needed to properly understand the seasonal timing of raptors. Count days per week ranged from zero for week 10/22 to five for week 9/3. Many migrants were missed from 9 October to 4 November when only four days were covered, and the longest period without observations were the 12 days from 22 October to 2 November. Because the phenomenal Broad-winged Hawk flight can be so brief in late September, we may have missed the major pulse of movement. We were present at Reno on only six of the fourteen days during the last two weeks in September.

The most useful data for interpretation of the fall flight are the average-raptors-per-hour numbers. These values lend a more realistic profile of the rate of hawk passage, ignoring total numbers and instead providing a rate of passing migrants, somewhat reducing inconsistencies in observer coverage through time and revealing some seasonal patterns.

Looking at Figure 2, the Broad-winged Hawk flight can be detected by the bar for the week beginning 9/10, and the Sharp-shinned Hawk movement can be seen for period 10/1. Red-tailed Hawks combined with the continuing Sharp-shinned Hawk flight and the major Tur-

key Vulture departure in early to mid-October to produce noticeably high rates for periods 10/8 and 10/15.

At a glance, one could conclude that the best time to view raptors at Reno would be the first two weeks in October (Figure 2). This was exactly the case in 1995 when the total raptors for these two weeks was 879 and 277, respectively. The highest diversity of raptors also occurred during this period, with 12 species seen in week 10/1, and ten seen in week 10/8.

Which side of the Mississippi River is best for hawk watching? The heavy-bodied hawks are really not the masters of flight, but more the slaves of wind. Hawks seek updrafts on migration, because their flight capabilities are much less than those of passerines, which can flap continuously for long hours over long distances. Updrafts are created by rising columns of warm air, called thermals, and by winds deflected upward by obstacles such as ridges. Raptors fly along what is called leading lines, landscape features that intensify or modify updrafts to assist their flight.

Mandernack (pers. comm.) asserts that the bluffs on the east side provide a barrier to winds with a westerly component, creating updrafts which hawks seek and ride. If this is true, then winds with an easterly component should produce a marked increase in raptors at Reno on the west side, striking the bluffs there and creating updrafts. Stravers and Bowles (1984) remark that, at their west-side site, easterly winds seemed to restrict hawk movement to the river, and westerly winds forced hawks to move along the ridge top.

For the most part, we did not see this at Reno, although Dankert recalls one memorable day of easterly winds. On 2 October the Sharp-shinned Hawks, which comprised 90 percent of the day's total, were tracking past in a narrow corridor at the same height, as if riding an invisible track. Winds were from the east-northeast from zero to 14 m.p.h. and the skies were overcast, quite a shift from the previous day's winds from the west-northwest at 14 to 30 m.p.h. and sunny skies, which created rising thermals. The total raptors for 2 October (east winds) was less than half that of 1 October (west winds), at 225 raptors, and it was less diverse. Dankert is now certain that the Sharp-shinned Hawks were indeed favoring the west side of the river, using the updrafts created by easterly breezes striking the western bluffs, in absence of rising thermals on an overcast day.

Why were there fewer raptors that day (east winds) than the previous day (west winds)? Probably, because raptor movement is highest in the fall during cold fronts when winds are from the west-northwest. There were certainly more raptors found when these conditions were present, 1 October, but the birds were probably not relying as heavily on the geography of the site for favorable winds, and instead were merely gaining height and gliding at will. The birds that day were certainly not in a narrow corridor overhead, and possibly were using the river more as a navigational aid.

What would Dankert have seen 1 October (west winds) had he been on the east side? Would the raptors have been more tightly grouped, passing overhead in a more narrow corridor? The region-wide flight sampled on 2 October (east winds) was probably lighter than that of 1 October (west winds), but, possibly, good numbers were tallied simply because those that were moving were indeed riding the updrafts along the bluffs on the west side of the river, created by easterly winds.

So, Mandernack's claim could well be true: the highest hawk numbers along the Mississippi River over a season will more likely be seen from the east side of the river, as at Eagle Valley, because more hawks move when the wind is west-northwest, and the birds will be more dense per unit of sky on the east side due to favorable updrafts. The Reno site shows, however, that good numbers can also be seen on the west side of the Mississippi River, and hawks might favor

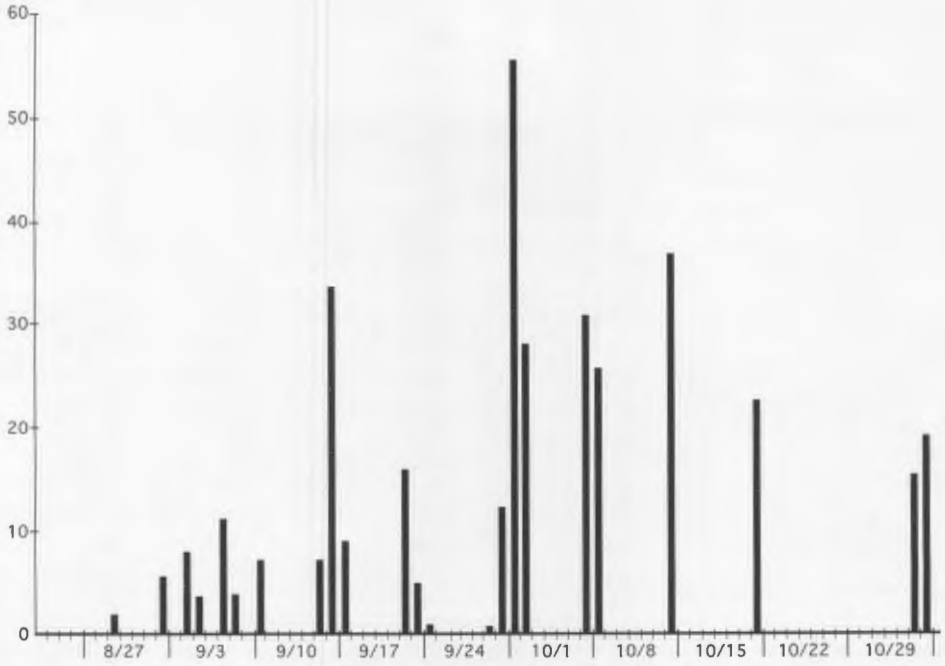

Figure 1. Average raptors per hour, per day.

these western bluffs during periods with easterly winds.

The site at Genoa, Wisconsin may prove to be the best comparison with Reno. Genoa Old Settlers Park lies 2.75 miles due east on the other side of the river, directly opposite the Reno site. Although we believe the site at Genoa is not as geographically favorable for raptor flights as Reno, we did see similar data in 1994. Genoa produced 203 raptors with 19.75 hours of effort in 1994, for a seasonal rate of 10.3 raptors per hour. Reno produced 212 raptors with 22.5 hours of effort for a seasonal rate of 9.4 raptors per hour. Although Reno allows the observer a better view, future coverage at Genoa may shed light on the theory that the east side of the Mississippi River valley is the best location for witnessing fall raptor flights along the river.

An important geographic feature along the bluffs of the Mississippi River, as it may relate to raptor movement, is the side valley, or coulee. These perpendicular valleys occur frequently along the bluff areas of the Mississippi River, formed by drainages in the watershed. Some of these are significant interruptions in the north-south orientation of the Mississippi River valley, such as Coon Creek south of La Crosse, and the Root River north of Reno. It would be a logical assumption that these side valleys act as leading lines and funnel more hawks into the Mississippi River valley, creating a cumulative effect as one moves south along the river's watershed.

We believe there may be instances where, on a small local scale, the birds are temporarily diverted away from the river, following a perpendicular ridge which provides favorable winds. One confounding factor at the Genoa site was that some raptors seemed to move away from the river north of the site, many out-of-range for identification. The same thing occurred with some birds at Reno, when hawks coming head-on turned west and flew over the upland farmland

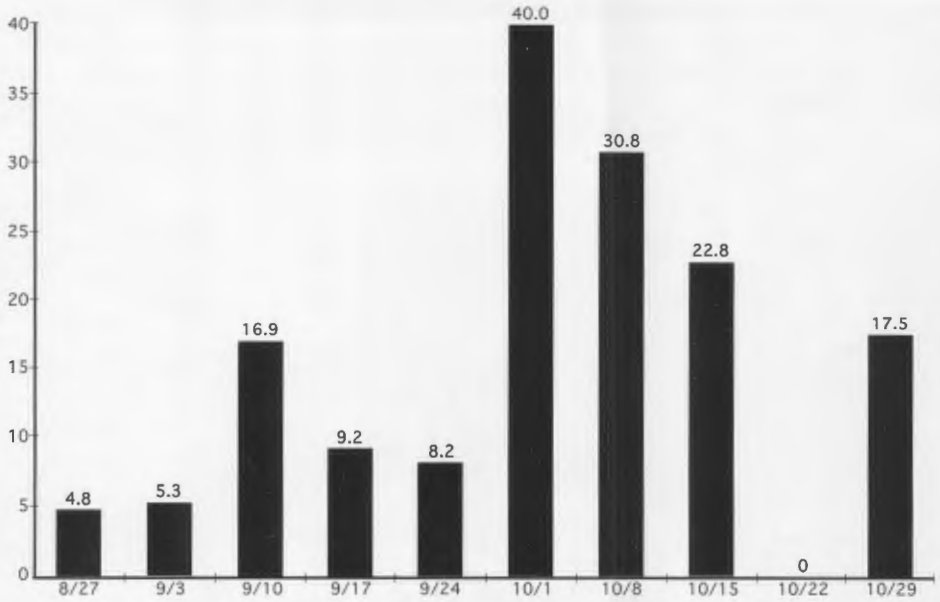

Figure 2. Average raptors per hour, per weekly period.

adjacent to the small valley.

Another geographic factor related to hawk migration is water. Raptors are known to avoid large expanses of water during their migration, unlike many passerines, which will traverse oceans. The water coverage of the Mississippi River may be great enough in some areas to limit raptor movement to the sides of the valley, especially on days of low winds or weak thermals. There is over two miles of water east of the Reno site, but on days with strong winds, birds were seen crossing the river in both directions. Sorting the various factors of wind and geography and correlating these with observed hawk flight is a perpetual and fascinating puzzle.

In comparing 1995 raptor data from Reno and Eagle Valley, it is important to note that for five raptor species, both sites had the same peak flight dates. These species (and dates) were Turkey Vulture (10/7), Northern Harrier (10/14), Sharp-shinned Hawk (10/1), Cooper's Hawk (10/1) and Merlin (10/1). The peak date for Peregrine Falcon at Eagle Valley was one day before the peak at Reno. The ratio of Cooper's Hawks to Sharp-shinned Hawks was 1-to-13 at Eagle Valley, about equivalent to the 1-12 ratio seen at Reno, a noteworthy similarity (Mandernack, pers. comm.).

If the Reno raptor totals for 1995 were extrapolated by multiplying our 17.6 raptors per hour by 600 hours (the 1995 effort at Eagle Valley), that would mean it could have been possible to see 10,560 raptors from the Reno site in 1995. The Mississippi River is indeed an important corridor for hawk migration, and good numbers can probably be seen at any high spot on either side of the river between August and November.

Acknowledgments

Jeff Dankert would like to thank Fred Lesher for adding an important historical perspective to this paper and for turning him on to hawk watching. The authors both wish to thank Manager Brett Mandernack at Eagle Valley Nature Pre-

serve for sharing his data with us. We would also like to thank David Dankert, Brian Collins, Cindy Collins, Lennie Lichter, and Cindy Brueggen for their help on the counts.

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Proceedings of the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee

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

There was a meeting of the Committee on 30 June 1996, and the agenda included discussions and decisions on several items, including: the status of two recently split species on the Minnesota list; a revised voting procedure when a record involves Committee members who observe the bird in question; votes on three records documented primarily by photographs (which are difficult to circulate by mail); votes on three records with inconclusive first-round vote totals (which require a recirculated, second-round vote at a meeting); and votes on two potential first state records (which require a vote at a meeting).

In the 40th supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American Birds (*The Auk* 112:819–830), the Rufous-sided Towhee *(Pipilo erythrophthalmus)* was split into two species, Spotted Towhee *(P. maculatus)* and Eastern Towhee *(P. erythrophthalmus)*, and the Northern Oriole *(Icterus galbula)* was also split into two species, Bullock's Oriole *(I. bullockii)* and Baltimore Oriole *(I. galbula)*. The Eastern Towhee is the more widespread towhee and regularly breeds in Minnesota, and, for the time being, it was decided to treat the Spotted Towhee as a Casual species until its true status can be determined. Therefore, unless this latter species proves to be of Regular status (which is probably the case), all Spotted Towhee records need to be documented. The Baltimore Oriole is the more widespread oriole and regularly breeds in the state, and it was decided to treat the Bullock's Oriole as an Accidental species since there is only one documented Minnesota record (Duluth, mid-October – 13 December 1968; ***The Loon*** 41:41–42).

MORC policy had been that a Commit-

tee member would not vote on a record if he were among the observers of the bird, and an alternate would then vote in his place. It was decided to amend this procedure so that now a Committee member will only be ineligible to vote on a record if he is one of those who originally discovers the bird; i.e., if a Committee member subsequently sees a bird found earlier by someone else, he is eligible to vote on the record. There were three reasons for this change: first, there have been many records in which several Committee members were among the observers, and there were not enough alternates available to vote in their places; second, we are aware of no other records committee with a policy similar to the one we had been following, thus suggesting it was unnecessary; and, third (and most importantly), since the best way to judge the validity of a record is to actually observe the bird in question, the vote of a Committee member who is a subsequent observer should be included.

At the 30 June meeting, the following records were voted on and found to be Acceptable:

- Magnificent Hummingbird, 16 June 1994, near Ogilvie, Kanabec Co. (photo record; ***The Loon*** 67:57).
- Prairie Warbler, June 1996, Cedar Creek Natural History Area, Anoka Co. (photo record).
- Osprey, 26 December 1994, near Stillwater, Washington Co. (recirculated record)
- Rock Ptarmigan, 20 May 1996, Grand Marais, Cook Co. (potential first state record; ***The Loon*** 68:79–81); research, discussion and vote on captive vs. wild origin still pending.

At the 30 June meeting, the following records were voted on and found to be Unacceptable:

- Barrow's Goldeneye (female), 29 February – 1 March 1996, Blue Lake sewage treatment plant, Scott Co. This individual was in the company of a male Barrow's Goldeneye, and the documentation consists primarily of photographs of the bird's head profile and bill size. However, the head shape seems to vary from photo to photo, with some of the photos showing the shape to be consistent with a female Common Goldeneye. The bill size as seen in the photos also appears to be entirely consistent with a female Common.
- Laughing Gull, 16 June 1986, York Township, Fillmore Co. This recirculated record had originally been accepted and published (***The Loon*** 58:137), but it was reevaluated this year along with seven other previously accepted Laughing Gull records (see below). The observer's description of these two gulls identified as adults is not specific enough to preclude first- or second-summer Franklin's Gulls, which closely resemble adult Laughing Gulls in their dorsal wing pattern. The observer was apparently unaware of this resemblance and, accordingly, does not explain why the birds were not sub-adult Franklin's.
- Laughing Gull, 7 May 1987, Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge, Marshall Co. This recirculated record had also originally been accepted and published (***The Loon*** 59:156), but reevaluated this year. As with the previous record, the observer was apparently unaware of the similarity in the wing patterns of sub-adult Franklin's Gulls and adult Laughing Gulls, and, therefore, the description of this apparent adult gull is not specific enough to rule out a first- or second-summer Franklin's Gull.
- Slaty-backed Gull, 8–13 April 1996, Red Wing, Goodhue Co. This potential first state record was studied by three observers, but only one of them felt certain enough of this adult gull's identity to document it as a Slaty-backed. While the Committee unanimously felt the identification might well have been correct, it was also felt that for a record to be accepted, especially a first state record, all the observers should agree on the identity of the bird. Additionally, the identification of an adult Slaty-backed Gull and separation from other dark-mantled gulls is most difficult and relies heavily on a

detailed description — or preferably a series of photos — of the exact dorsal and ventral wing patterns. But the documentation submitted, while lengthy and well written, unfortunately does not provide a thorough enough description of the wings.

The following records were voted on by mail January-June 1996 and found to be Acceptable:

- Yellow-throated Warbler, 18 May – 5 August 1995, Sibley State Park, Kandiyohi Co.
- Black-legged Kittiwake, 12 November 1995, near Orwell Wildlife Management Area, Otter Tail Co. (***The Loon*** 68:71).
- Black-legged Kittiwake, 1 – 2 December 1995, Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co. (***The Loon*** 68:71-73).
- Clark's Grebe, 11 August 1995, Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge, Marshall Co.
- Barrow's Goldeneye, 2 December 1995 – March 1996, Blue Lake sewage treatment plant (***The Loon*** 68:130–131).
- Swamp Sparrow, 25 November 1995, near Barnum, Carlton Co.
- Iceland Gull, 1 December 1995, Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co. (***The Loon*** 67:252–253).
- Barrow's Goldeneye, 26 February 1995, Lac Qui Parle Lake, Lac Qui Parle Co. (***The Loon*** 68:175).
- Henslow's Sparrow, 8 October 1995, Black Dog Lake, Dakota Co.
- Henslow's Sparrow, 11 October 1995, near Plummer, Red Lake Co. (***The Loon*** 68:74–75.
- Gyrfalcon, January – February 1996, Duluth, St. Louis Co.
- Laughing Gull, 28-30 June 1992, Ruthton, Pipestone Co. (***The Loon*** 64:178–179; this and the following record had previously been accepted and published, they were reevaluated this year along with six other Laughing Gull records, and their acceptance was reaffirmed).
- Laughing Gull, 15 June 1995, Cameron Lake, Polk Co. (***The Loon*** 67:173–175; see above).
- Chipping Sparrow, 4 December 1995, Hoyt Lakes, St. Louis Co.
- Common Raven, 23 March 1996, near La Crescent, Houston Co. (***The Loon*** 68:177).
- California Gull, 30 March 1996, Fergus Falls, Otter Tail Co. (***The Loon*** 68:177).
- Great Black-backed Gull, 30 March 1996, Bloomington, Hennepin Co. (***The Loon*** 68:173).
- Savannah Sparrow, 13 December 1995 – 13 March 1996, Brooklyn Park, Hennepin Co. (***The Loon*** 68:128).
- Lesser Black-backed Gull, 25 March 1996, Rainy River, Lake Of the Woods Co.
- Lesser Black-backed Gull, 10 – 13 April 1996, Bloomington, Hennepin Co.
- Lesser Black-backed Gull, 22 April 1996, Diamond Lake, Hennepin Co.
- Clark's Grebe, 4 May 1996, Myre-Big Island State Park, Freeborn Co. (***The Loon*** 68:174–175).
- Western Tanager, 17 May 1996, Wealthwood, Aitkin Co.
- White-faced Ibis, 15 May 1996, Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge, Lac Qui Parle Co. (***The Loon*** 68:179)

The following records were voted on by mail January-June 1996 and found to be Unacceptable:

- Pacific Loon, 7–22 October 1995, Two Harbors, Lake Co. The majority felt the identification was probably correct, but the documentation was apparently only written from memory two months after the observation, and, other than mention of a "slight chin strap", the brief description includes no useful plumage details.
- White-rumped Sandpiper, 7 November 1995, Milford Township, Brown Co. The experienced observer's identification may well have been correct, but the description omits too many important details since neither the white rump nor the longer primary extension are mentioned.
- Western Sandpiper, 2 October 1995, Cottonwood, Lyon Co. The color of the back is described as "golden-marbled", and the size is described as that of a

Semipalmated Plover, but neither feature is consistent with Western Sandpiper. In addition, the observer was unaware of how rare this species is in Minnesota, suggesting the bird was not studied carefully enough for a positive identification.

• Western Sandpiper, 4 September 1995, near Faribault, Rice Co. No description of this individual is provided; the documentation only states that it looked the same as the bird in the other 4 September record below, but this record was unacceptable.

• Western Sandpiper, 4 September 1995, near Faribault, Rice County The identification was based on spotted underparts, rust on the head and scapulars, and a drooped bill; however, these features are also consistent with White-rumped Sandpiper. It is also unlikely that an observer would be able to find Western Sandpipers three times in one month in the same county. The record is also weakened by the fact that the observers were unaware of how unusual the species is in Minnesota.

• Western Sandpiper, 23 September 1995, Phelps Lake, Rice Co. The reasons given for not accepting the above record also apply here. In addition, this record is even weaker since neither size nor leg color were noted.

• Thayer's Gull, 12 November 1995, Hunt Lake, Rice Co. The identification was based on the gull's darker eye and brighter pink legs than on a Herring Gull; however, the iris color is only useful on adult birds and there is no mention of the age of this gull, and there is no consistent difference in the leg colors of these two species. There is also no clear description of the pattern of the wing tips.

• Thayer's Gull, 5 November 1995, Alexander Lake, Rice Co. This identification was apparently based almost entirely on eye color, but, as with the previous record, this field mark works only on adult birds, and there is no mention of this gull's age.

• Laughing Gull, 9–15 June 1983, Frontenac State Park, Goodhue Co. A previously accepted and published record (***The Loon*** 55:125–126) which was reevaluated this year. As with the other records of birds originally identified as adult Laughing Gulls and recently reconsidered (see above), the observers were unaware of the similar wing pattern shown by first- and second-summer Franklin's Gulls, which are not precluded by the documentation.

• Laughing Gull, 27 May 1989, Florence Township, Goodhue Co. An unpublished record not previously voted on and considered unacceptable for the same reasons indicated above.

• Laughing Gull, 27 May 1989, Whitewater Wildlife Management Area, Wabasha Co. Another previously accepted, published (***The Loon*** 61:152–153), and reevaluated record; considered unacceptable for the same reasons indicated above.

• Laughing Gull, 28 May 1989, Duluth, St. Louis Co. Another previously accepted, published (***The Loon*** 61:93), and reevaluated record; considered unacceptable for the same reasons indicated above.

• Loggerhead Shrike, 16 December 1995, Audubon, Becker Co. The "short, dark beak with no visible hook" is perhaps suggestive of a Loggerhead, but the description provides no other useful information and therefore is too brief to fully preclude a Northern Shrike.

• Osprey, 16 December 1995, Bloomington Christmas Bird Count, Hennepin Co. The sketchy description is consistent with Osprey, but it does not fully preclude Rough-legged Hawk. The record is also weakened by the apparent inexperience of the observer, and there is a long history of other raptors being misidentified as Ospreys in winter.

• Black Rail, 4 May 1996, Minneapolis, Hennepin Co. The description is too brief and incomplete for such an unusual species to be accepted. The observers also describe themselves as inexperienced, and at one point in the documentation they state, "we're now both skeptical that it was a Black Rail." **8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.**

BIRDING BY HINDSIGHT

A Second Look at Ducks

Kim R. Eckert

If ever there were an unassuming group of birds, one that attracts relatively little attention from birding experts or identification articles, this would be it. If you're a hunter or wildlife refuge manager, sure, ducks and other waterfowl are of great import, but to many birders they tend to be taken pretty much for granted. The males, at least, usually just sleep or swim there in our spotting scope's field of view as we match their generally unambiguous patterns with the pictures in the field guides. And if one of those nondescript females drifts into view, most of the time there's a male of the same species next to her which is a lot easier to figure out. Hawks...shorebirds...gulls...flycatchers... confusing fall warblers...sparrows — now here we have some real birds to worry about and argue over. It's these hard ones that get all the publicity, not those perfectly obvious Wood Ducks and their ilk.

Still, I often see less experienced birders struggling with the identifications of some ducks that I would consider straightforward. And there are apparently enough difficulties to necessitate an identification reference devoted to ducks and other waterfowl, namely: *Waterfowl: An Identification Guide to the Ducks, Geese and Swans of the World* by Madge and Burn. This book is recommended to anyone trying to solve the more difficult identifications which are beyond the scope of this article or your Geographic field guide. Note, however, such duck difficulties are relatively few in number. It is also necessary to pay attention when examining the color plates, since the arrangement of the species is frustrating and confusing. In most cases, the placement of a species' illustrations inexplicably does not match the placement of that species' text and range maps on the facing page!

Following are some brief comments on the identification of those ducks which may pose difficulties for Minnesota birders. Most of these involve female-plumaged birds at rest — many ducks are more easily identified when their wing patterns are visible. In most cases, female-plumaged would also apply to full-grown immatures in late summer and fall, adult males in eclipse plumage in summer and early fall, and adult females at any season.

Teals with Green Wings. Sometimes swimming female ducks do us a favor by arranging their folded wings in such a way that their wing patches become visible. So, if you're looking at a dabbling duck small enough to convince you it's really one of the teals, and a piece of a green becomes visible on the folded wing, are you safe in assuming it's a

Green-winged? Sorry, it's not that simple, since Blue-wingeds (and Cinnamons, for that matter) also have a green secondary patch in addition to their pale blue wing coverts. With practice or direct comparison, you'll be able to see female Green-wingeds appear darker overall than Blue-wingeds, with a smaller bill and a steeper forehead profile.

More difficult is the separation of female-plumaged Blue-winged and Cinnamon teals. Given a good look or direct comparison, though, Cinnamons appear richer brown overall, with a plainer face pattern and a larger bill; Blue-wingeds are more grayish brown, with a more obvious line through the eye and a pale spot at the base of a smaller bill. Nondescript male Cinnamons in eclipse plumage during summer and early fall offer an additional clue if you're close enough: their eyes are red. The real problem is with immature teals in fall of both sexes and all three species, since those plumage differences mentioned above do not apply. When faced with a teal you're not sure of, consult Madge and Burn's *Waterfowl* guide, and it is also worth finding and reading the article on teal identification in *Birding* magazine (23:124–133).

Black Mallards. If ever there were a duck birders take for granted and spend little time examining with a critical eye, it would be the ubiquitous Mallard. Still, a female-plumaged Mallard is quite nondescript if its diagnostic wing pattern is not visible, its plumage is as featureless as that of a female teal, and birders frequently have trouble distinguishing between a teal and Mallard when size is unclear.

A most frequent and underrated identification problem involves males in eclipse plumage in summer and fall. Before these Mallards regain their full breeding plumage, their chest is dark enough to make their head look contrastingly paler than the rest of their generally brown plumage. The result is that these ducks become misidentified all the time as American Black Ducks.

Pintailed Wigeons. While female Northern Pintails often give beginning birders problems, this is one duck that should be relatively easy to figure out. The combination of blue-gray bill, long and thin neck, and overall uniformly grayish buff plumage should make a pintail relatively easy to pick out of a flock. In addition, a female-plumaged pintail is just as easy to pick out in flight. Not only is its long, thin neck distinctive, but also its tail is visibly longer and more pointed than most other ducks. I say "most" because birders are generally unaware that the tail of an American Wigeon also appears visibly pointed and quite pintail-like in flight. But this wigeon-pintail resemblance ends when a female-plumaged wigeon is viewed at rest. It's actually as distinctive in appearance as the pintail. Like the pintail, it has a bluish gray bill, but note the wigeon's unique pattern of grayish head contrasting with buffy brown sides.

And speaking of wigeons, how does one identify a female Eurasian Wigeon, and what about the problem of EurasianXAmerican hybrids? Good questions for which there are no good answers possible within the space limitations of this article. Most female Eurasians have richer brown heads than the gray-headed female Americans, but some Eurasian Wigeons have grayer heads and would be identifiable only if their gray axillaries are visible in flight (axillaries white on Americans). It would be best to consult Madge and Burn's book for more information on these females. And the issue of hybrid wigeons, males included, is even more complex. A short article in *Birding* magazine (28:309–310) discusses this problem in general and refers the reader to a more specific article on these hybrids in the journal *Western Birds* (24:105–107). Read them both and let me know what you learn, since I have no idea how to tell a hybrid from the real thing.

Gadwall Bills. As indicated earlier, the plumages of female teals and Mallards are best described as nondescript. Now add female-plumaged Gadwall to this list,

since it looks a lot like a female Mallard when wing patterns are not visible. Note, however, the Gadwall's bill is evenly bi-colored: dark gray on the top half, orange on the lower half. A female Mallard's bill is also dark gray and orange, but the line dividing these colors tends not to be as straight. Look also for the Gadwall's steeper forehead profile (more sloping on the Mallard) and its fainter eye line which often disappears in front of the eye (the Mallard's eye line is bolder).

Canvasback Backs. All the field guides correctly point out the difference in the head-bill profiles of Canvasbacks and Redheads. But too many birders are unaware that the plumages of these two ducks — whether male or female — is usually easier to see. If it's a male, note the Canvasback's bright white back and sides, which are quite unlike the dingy gray back and sides of the Redhead. And the females are almost as distinctive, with the Canvasback having a buffy head/neck and pale gray back/sides, unlike the Redhead which is much darker and more uniform brown overall.

Redheads vs. Ring-neckeds. So, if a female-plumaged Redhead fails to resemble a Canvasback, how does it differ from a female-plumaged Ring-necked Duck? A good question, and one that is not asked often enough. I have yet to find a field guide which considers them similar species, and not too many years ago I was still not entirely sure how to separate these two females.

The guides do note the Ring-necked's white ring near the bill tip, its eye ring and its white line behind the eye, but they fail to mention that some Redheads have these same features. The useful differences are two-fold: first, note the Redhead's rounder head profile, unlike the Ring-necked's clearly peaked head shape; and second, the Redhead's overall plumage is more uniform brown, while the Ring-necked's plumage is two-toned with its upperparts darker than its face, neck and sides.

Scaup Heads. The difficulties of Lesser vs. Greater Scaup identification have long been a topic of discussion among birders and in the field guides. Field marks such as the male's iridescent head colors (which are unreliable and dependent on light conditions), wing stripe lengths (often hard to clearly see and frequently intermediate), and head shapes (now we're getting somewhere) are all familiar enough that they need not be repeated here. Instead, in addition to the Madge and Burn guide, I would refer the reader to the chapter on scaup in Kaufman's *Advanced Birding* guide for further information.

My only comments here are three-fold. First, note that some female Greater Scaup, especially as the breeding season approaches, show an obvious white spot on the ear coverts. Female Lessers never have as bold a spot, but at the same time be aware these Greaters might be mistaken for a female-plumaged Surf or White-winged scoter. Second, while comparative head shape is perhaps the most useful scaup field mark of all, be aware that actively diving Lessers often appear as round- or flat-headed as any Greater. Greaters always seem consistent in their rounder head profiles, but I see Lessers all the time with what seem to be intermediate head shapes — or a shape that appears to alternate between peaked and round. Which leads me to point number three: I seem to be getting worse, not better, at scaup identification. The more I have been looking at scaup in recent years, the less confident I seem to be about their identity. It's that head shape problem that seems to be most troubling, something that never apparently confused me in the past. You're certainly not alone, therefore, if scaup identification is something you have yet to feel comfortable with.

Eiders. Just finding an eider in Minnesota is hard enough, and once you do things don't get any easier as you try to identify it. While adult males are no problem, it is most likely you'll encounter a female-plumaged bird or a young male. Most King Eiders (the more likely of the

two eiders possible in Minnesota) have a white eye ring and stripe behind the eye, which most Commons lack. On female Kings, try to see the shorter, V-shaped barring on the sides; female Commons have longer, straighter lines on their sides. And on first-year males, which are highly variable in plumage, concentrate on the feathering at the base of the bill: rounder in shape and stopping short of the nostril on Kings; more pointed in shape and extending up to the nostril on Commons. Once again, for more information consult the Madge and Burn *Waterfowl* guide.

Harlequin Heads. Contrary to most field guide illustrations, female-plumaged Harlequin Ducks usually appear to have two, not three, head spots. That small third spot in front of the eye either tends to be invisible or it merges with the spot at the base of the bill. As a result, these two-spotted Harlequins are frequently mistaken for female scoters when relative size is unclear.

Scoters. This article has already touched on how female Greater Scaup and Harlequin Ducks can be misidentified as scoters, but how does one separate non-adult male scoters from each other? Sure, part of the White-winged's wing patch often pokes out into view on a swimming bird, but it's amazing how long one of these scoters can swim without offering a glimpse of that white.

Such White-wingeds then look a lot like Surf Scoters, but it's helpful to look for two features before claiming a genuine Surf Scoter. First, the base of a Surf's bill meets the face and the first of its pale head spots as a straight vertical line, while the base of the White-winged's bill is curved.

And second, the Surf's crown is contrastingly blacker than the rest of the face; the White-winged lacks this contrast. But beware. This blacker crown is even visible on a distant Surf Scoter when its head spots may not be as evident, and it will then strongly resemble a female-plumaged Black Scoter.

Brown-eyed Goldeneyes. Female-plumaged goldeneye identification is indeed one of those few problems with ducks that cannot be adequately covered in an article such as this. Of course, Madge and Burn's *Waterfowl* book is recommended, and it would also be helpful to consult the article on goldeneyes in *Birding* magazine from a few years ago (18:17–27).

While space limitations preclude discussion here of the finer points of goldeneye identification, there are four points to be aware of when addressing this problem. First, contrary to what that *Birding* article implies, there is no useful difference between the two goldeneyes in the amount of white visible in the folded wings of a swimming bird: this varies and depends primarily on how the duck chooses to arrange its feathers.

Second, beware of bill colors, since female Commons infrequently appear to have entirely yellow or orange bills. And, again contrary to that *Birding* article, "all" adult female Barrow's have all yellow or orange bills. A goldeneye with a bicolored bill is most likely a Common, and would probably only be a Barrow's if in transition between juvenal and adult plumages or if it's an adult female of the non-migratory Iceland population (see *Birding* 19:21–22).

Third, immature goldeneyes are not golden-eyed. They have duller, browner eyes, and, more importantly, they may not yet have developed the "correct" head profile and bill shape of an adult. Therefore, while an adult female goldeneye's head/bill profile is important, do not rely on it when looking at a brown-eyed immature.

And fourth, female-plumaged Barrow's may tend to have darker brown heads than Commons, but this is often tricky to determine depending on light conditions. Also note that in strong light a female Common's head clearly appears reddish brown, which, in combination with its grayish body, has misled more than one beginner into mistaking it for a male Redhead.

Hooded Buffleheads. It was only a few years ago I began to notice something about Buffleheads and Hooded Mergansers that had somehow escaped me before then. This revelation was that first-year males of both these species, especially in spring, are generally dark overall with a white patch on the side of the head. In other words, they both look like adult female Buffleheads. While one of these young male Buffleheads is not much of a problem (there's no harm done if you mistake it for an adult female), but be aware of the potential for misidentifying a young male Hooded Merganser as a female-plumaged Bufflehead.

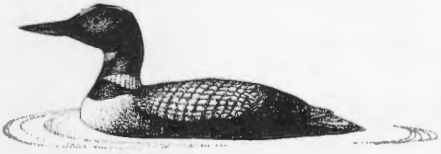
Mergansers. The standard field guides have always been adequate in showing the difference between female Common and Red-breasted mergansers. A Common shows an obvious and clean-cut contrast between its reddish brown head and its white throat and chest, while these colors are blurred on a Red-breasted.

There is a problem, though, with immature Commons in summer and fall which have less distinct head-throat-chest patterns and look very much like female Red-breasteds. When faced with such an ambiguous merganser, concentrate on its forehead profile (sloping on Common, more vertical on Red-breasted) and its bill shape (thicker at the base on Common, more uniform throughout its length on Red-breasted).

Now is as good a time as any to concentrate on your duck identification abilities, since fall is winding down (a favorable time to encounter rarities) and since Christmas Bird Count time will be here before you know it. A late-lingering duck you encounter now might well be a lone female without any males around to help you figure out her identity. But at any time of year, by all means, there is no better way to reinforce your skill at identifying females than by noting and identifying the males they associate with. Don't assume, however, that a female hanging around a male will necessarily be of the same species: for example, male Cinnamon Teals in Minnesota are often attracted to female Blue-wingeds, and male Barrow's Goldeneyes will similarly associate with female Commons. These lonely males are out of range, they probably can't find a female of the same species, and out of desperation they end up doing what many birders do: misidentify that female duck!

8255 Congdon Blvd., Duluth, MN 55804.

NOTES OF INTEREST



GROOVE-BILLED ANI RECORD FROM LUTSEN, COOK COUNTY — On Sunday, 15 October 1995, while scouting for an upcoming tour to the North Shore, I found a Groove-billed Ani at the Lutsen sewage ponds. I had wanted to check the condition of the road leading into the ponds, the water level there, and if there were any birds present. Arriving at the ponds about 4:00 P.M., I could see there was much bird activity along the shore in the back of the right-hand pond. The pond on the left had been drawn down and contained only a small amount of water. It had grass, small shrubs, and even several small trees growing within it. As the light conditions did not allow me to identify all the birds present on

the right-hand pond, I began to walk the dike that separated the two ponds in an attempt to get a better light angle on those birds present. After walking only a few steps, a large black bird flushed from the vegetation along the shore of the right pond. It flew low, up and over the dike and into a small tree growing in the left rear of the left pond. This bird was large, easily as large or larger than a grackle. It flew low to the ground in a rather disjointed flight, consisting of a few hurried flaps of the wings mixed with short glides. The tail was almost disproportionately long, and the wings were short and rounded. The bird gave one emphatic call as it flushed, a high-pitched, almost metallic "teenk." I recognized this bird immediately as a Groove-billed Ani, a species I have become very familiar with in my travels to Mexico and Central America. I knew this was a significant record for Minnesota, and I recalled that Ken and Molly Hoffman had found at least one Groove-billed Ani in Cook County previously. I raced back to my car to drive back to Lutsen to place several calls to Minneapolis and Duluth birders. After spreading the word, I returned to the pond to try and get more notes. At this time, I was able to get marginally closer to the bird, still in the left pond, and see a few more details. The thick, arched bill had obvious grooves on the large, strongly curved upper mandible. Although the bill was large, it did not have a higher arching ridge on the upper mandible close to the base of the bill, as would a Smooth-billed Ani. The culmen of this bird was even with the top of the head, giving it a very round-headed appearance. Plumage was entirely black, with a very slight glossy greenish sheen on the back. (Light angles may have made this an artifact of lighting instead of real coloration.) Feathering around the neck of this bird was the typical rough plumage distinctive to anis. Lacking a scope, and not wishing to scare the bird with a closer approach, I made a few sketches and then left. **Kim Risen, 5756 Brunswick Ave. N., Crystal, MN 55429.**

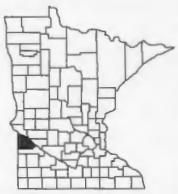
GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL IN HENNEPIN COUNTY — On the morning of 30 March 1996, Steve Carlson called to report that he had found an adult Great Black-backed Gull at the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge, Hennepin County. I arrived about half an hour later and observed the bird standing on the ice of Long Meadow Lake in direct comparison with Herring and Ring-billed Gulls. Although the overcast light was relatively poor, we were able to walk within a few hundred feet of the gull as it slept on the ice. This Great Black-backed Gull appeared noticeably larger than the Herring Gulls when standing side-by-side with them, but when sleeping, it appeared the same size as the Herring Gulls. The entire body plumage, head, and tail were immaculate. The bill was noticeably larger than the adjacent Herring Gulls and appeared entirely yellow except for a pale red spot on the gonys. The eye looked darkish, even at close range, whereas the Herring Gulls' eyes looked yellow; I could barely see contrast between the pupil and the iris during the best view. As pointed out by Robert H. Lewis in *Birding* (28:98) recently, adult Great Black-backed Gulls often appear to have dark eyes. The legs were pink, but when seen next to Herring Gulls in poor light, the legs looked a grayer, paler pink. When seen at a distance, the mantle looked jet black, almost as black as the wingtips; but when seen closer, there was noticeable contrast between the mantle and the black wingtips. The mantle was a more faded, brownish slate color than the pure black of the wingtips. During the more distant view while the gull was preening, it opened its wing briefly, showing what appeared to be an entirely white tip (2–3 inches long) to the outermost primary (P 10). When seen closer and sleeping on the ice, I could see the underside of the opposite wing, which showed a narrow, blackish subterminal band across what I assumed to be the leading primary. Although this contradicts the earlier impression that the leading primary had an entirely white tip, it

is possible I was seeing the subterminal band on P 9 showing through the entirely white P 10 (as is shown in several of the photos in Grant's *Gulls: A guide to identification*, 1986). Finally, the bird was seen in flight, and definitely showed two large white mirrors on the two outermost primaries, but whether the leading primary had a narrow subterminal black band or was entirely white on the distal 2-3 inches, I could not confirm. Although Slaty-backed Gull is easily eliminated by the absence of white tongue tips on primaries 6-8 (*American Birds* 40:207–216) and the dark appearance to the underside of the primaries and secondaries (both of these characteristics were specifically noted while observing the gull), we were concerned that Western Gull was sufficiently eliminated. Although Western Gulls can appear to have a small darkish eye, a slate-colored mantle slightly paler than the black wingtips, and they can appear to be larger than Herring Gulls, at least in bill size, the presence of two large white mirrors in the two outermost primaries (P 9 and P 10) is in contrast to Western Gull, which usually shows a smaller mirror on P 10, and does not usually have a mirror on P 9. This information is based on Grant (1986), Bruce Fall's article on the identification of the adult Great Black-backed Gull at the Twin Cities in 1991 (***The Loon*** 64:12-15), photographs of these gulls in various field guides, and my own slides of Western Gulls from Oregon and Washington. Finally, I do not believe a Western Gull would appear substantially larger in body size and stand noticeably taller than all Herring Gulls, as did the Great Black-backed Gull we observed. Although most records of this virtually regular but still only casual species occur on the North Shore of Lake Superior, there has been an increasing number of reports from southern Minnesota, including one each during the last two springs. This record represents only the fourth Twin Cities record and only the second Hennepin County observation. **Karl Bardon, 1430 – 100th Avenue NW, #212, Coon Rapids, MN 55433.**

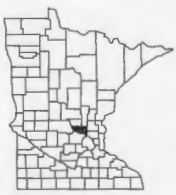
CLARK'S GREBE — Date: 5/4/96. Time: 2:30 P.M. Location: Freeborn County, Albert Lea Lake, Myre-Big Island State Park. Observer: David Neitzel. Weather: Partly cloudy, 50s, slight breeze. Viewing Conditions: The bird was watched for 30 minutes from the north shore of the lake (state park land) and was not backlit (was well-lit by the sun). Range: The bird was 100-150 yards offshore. Optics Used: Bausch & Lomb Elites, 8X42; Kowa TSN-2 with 20X and 60X eyepieces. Observer's Familiarity with Clark's Grebes: Seen them before in Wyoming. I have also seen hundreds of Western Grebes over the years. Setting: I was at the park to look for warblers and sparrows, and noticed a sizable raft of birds out on the lake. I drove over to the birds and parked adjacent to them. There were 300-500 Ruddy Ducks, a few other ducks, many coots, 10 Horned Grebes, and the Clark's Grebe. (There were no Western Grebes in this part of the lake, and none were seen by me on the lake.) The Clark's Grebe was passed off as a Western on a quick scan with my binoculars; however, the grebe immediately caught my attention when I brought out my spotting scope to better study the bird. Description: No field guides were consulted prior to writing this report; however, I reviewed my notes and memory with Kim Eckert's article in Birding magazine (25:304-310) to double-check my identification of the bird. I knew some of the primary identification marks prior to seeing the bird (i.e. eye position, bill color, etc.). The bird immediately caught my attention as a "washed-out, white-looking" Western Grebe. I quickly realized it was a Clark's Grebe when I saw that the eye was completely surrounded in white (no gray or black), the lores were white, and the bill was a bright orange-yellow. As I watched the bird dive and catch two fish and preen, I saw the bill at different angles and it always appeared orange-yellow. Further Observations: Head and neck: The black on

the top of the head was reduced enough so that the bird appeared to have a black triangle on the top of his head. The rest of the head and neck appeared very white. The white on the neck appeared to wrap around the sides of the neck onto the back of the neck. Black on the back of the neck was not very visible unless the bird was swimming away from me. Body: The flanks looked really washed-out and were especially whitish right at the water line. The back was a uniform medium-gray color that contrasted with the darker black on the top of the head. **David Neitzel, 7716 Upper 24th St. N., Oakdale, MN 55128-5029.**

A BARROW'S GOLDENEYE SIGHTING — Lac Qui Parle County, 26 February 1995. Mostly overcast skies, 36 degrees F. Wind from the northwest about 5-10 m.p.h. I had heard from a non-birding friend of a large white goose among the thousands of Canada Geese at Lac Qui Parle Lake. Assuming a Tundra Swan, I immediately went to check this out. Most of the lake was still iced over, except for the very south end. There were probably 10,000 geese in the area, as well as a few dozen ducks and the Tundra Swan. After watching the swan, I thought to scan the ducks before leaving. Mallards, scaups, and goldeneyes were all present, but what caught my attention was a male Goldeneye that looked different than the rest of the group. The head looked more rounded and definitely had a purplish cast to it, even when looking at it from different angles. Also, the cheek patch looked different than the others, extending farther up the face and more oblong than round. I suspected a Barrow's Goldeneye, but didn't believe it because of its scarcity in Minnesota. I tried to single out calls, but the geese were too loud to distinguish anything. After consulting Peterson and National Geographic guides, I began to look at body markings. There was a significant difference between the patterns on the Common Goldeneyes and this individual. The markings had an overall darker appearance. Again comparing the heads and cheek patches of the male goldeneyes, I noticed distinct differences in this bird. When the birds finally flew, this bird stood apart from the Commons with less white in the wing pattern. This was certainly a Barrow's Goldeneye, and a nice addition to the "large white goose." **Roger Schroeder, 505 S. Whitney, Marshall, MN 56258.**



A WESTERN TANAGER IN SHERBURNE COUNTY — On 26 May 1996 while searching the Santiago Oak Savannah Natural Research Area, located in the northwestern corner of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge, I saw an unusual tanager. When I first saw the bird, it was flying from tree to tree, foraging for insects in an opening of bur oaks. I saw a flash of orange and black and thought initially that it was a male Northern Oriole. I then heard the hoarse, burry song of a Scarlet Tanager coming from the same tree that the "oriole" landed in. When I brought my binoculars up to locate the songster, I was surprised to see a bright yellow-orange bird with black wings and tail giving the tanager song. The breast and belly area of the bird were a pale yellow-orange color, with the head and back area being more intensely orange. I observed and photographed the bird as it perched and sang continuously from the top of a large oak tree for about ten minutes. I lost sight of the bird after it flew off into thicker woods. Bent's Life Histories of Northern American Blackbirds, Orioles, Tanagers, and Allies indicates that young males in first nuptial plumage can have a body color which is "decidedly yellowish ... often more tinged with orange above and yellower below." This description fits the bird that I saw quite well. Although I walked through the same area where I first saw the bird on a daily basis throughout the months of June and July, I never saw it again.



I did on several occasions see a normal- colored male tanager and his mate in the same area during June and July. Either the abnormally-colored male moved to another area or the second male chased it out of the area. **Jane Hartwig, 625 - 12th Ave. N., St. Cloud, MN 56303.**

TURKEY VULTURE NEST REPORT — A survey conducted on 24 May 1996 in the Pig's Eye area of St. Paul (T 28 N, R 22 W) turned up an unusual find. I was walking through a river bottom forest area and flushed a large bird from the forest floor. The bird flew about 10–15 yards and landed on a branch, where I could see it was a Turkey Vulture. It appeared to flinch several times, wanting to fly, but not wanting to leave at the same time. Within a minute, its desire to stay was apparently overwhelmed. It regurgitated as it left the perch, dodging branches and climbing at a steep angle upward to escape through the canopy. I went to investigate the site where it had flushed from the ground, expecting to find a source of carrion. I was surprised to find a large, oval-shaped egg laying in a 12–18 inch diameter scraped area in the ground litter layer. The egg was light gray or off-white with small splotches of various shades of purple, especially on the large

Turkey Vulture nest, 24 May 1996, St. Paul, Washington County. Photo by Steve Kittelson.

end. A baby food jar was also in the scraped area, seven or eight inches from the egg. The scraped nest itself was partially hidden under the edge of a fallen tree top. I returned to the location with fellow workers and a camera to document the nest approximately two hours later. We did not see the vulture on the second visit, but we did notice that the baby food jar had been moved next to the egg since the first visit. A quick check of the nest site on 14 June did find the vulture attending the nest, and

the egg and the baby food jar still in the nest. No further visits have been made since that date. **Steve Kittelson, Nongame Wildlife Program, MN DNR, St. Paul, MN 55155.**

A COMMON RAVEN SIGHTING — On 23 March 1996, a group of birders led by Fred Lesher had just concluded a day-long Mississippi River birding trip. The last stop of the trip was in the vicinity of Brownsville, Houston County, where we observed an active Bald Eagle nesting site. Just south of Highway 16, off Highway 26, is a sod farm. This sod farm is a good location for early shorebirds, gulls, etc. I drove onto the access road to the sod farm, where I stopped my vehicle. I was observing a flock of gulls on the sod farm field when I heard the low gurgle or croaking call of the Common Raven just behind me. I looked up and the bird was flying right over me. It was not much more than 30-35 feet above me. I am very familiar with ravens, as they are fairly numerous in Monroe County, Wisconsin, where I live. Without my binoculars, I immediately recognized the large size of the bird and the heavy bill. I then observed the raven through my binoculars and looked at the large wedged tail which is diagnostic when flying overhead. The bird was flapping its wings in a slow movement, unlike a crow, which continually flaps much faster and steadily. The sky was partly cloudy, but the view of the raven was in direct sunlight. **Dennis Kuecherer, Route 1, Box 148, Tomah, WI 54660.**

CALIFORNIA GULL AT FERGUS FALLS, OTTER TAIL COUNTY — My wife and I spotted a large gull standing on the ice with six Ring-billed Gulls on 30 March 1996. This bird was obviously larger than the birds next to it, though the difference in size was not as striking as that between a Ring-billed and a Herring Gull. What caught my eye initially was its darker shade of gray, noticeably darker than that of a Herring or Ring-billed (which to me look very much the same shade, quite a bit lighter than the California Gull). The eye was dark brown and the bill a deep, rich yellow-gold with a red spot near the tip, possibly with a small area of black ahead of the red, though if present, this black area was very small. The bird's legs were not as clearly yellow as those of the Ring-billeds, but more of a dull yellow with a bit of a greenish cast. When the birds took flight, direct comparison with a Ring-billed was made. Again, the darker dorsal area and larger size of the California Gull were noted and were very obvious with a Ring-billed next to it for comparison. I would call this a "classic" adult California Gull. **Steve Millard, 630 W. Laurel, Fergus Falls, MN 56537.**

MOVING DAY FOR THE HOUSE FINCHES — Donald and Elaine Klefsaas, who live in Brooklyn Center, were pleased and excited when a pair of House Finches decided to build their nest in the middle story of a three-tier basket filled with blossoming geraniums hanging on their front porch. They carefully avoided disturbing the birds, but shortly after their discovery, some workmen came to repair their spouting around the porch. This left them puzzled as to what to do, since the workmen were reluctant to change their work schedule. Waiting until the last moment on July 22, they decided to move the whole series of hanging baskets to a hook that happened to be available on their next-door neighbor's garage, about 50 feet away. The nest contained four eggs on the morning of the move, but they had made no record of just how long the eggs had been incubated.

Unfortunately, no one reported whether or not the birds actually incubated the eggs at the new location. After a day and a half, the workmen completed their work and the baskets were moved back to their original location. The nest contained three newly-hatched young and one unhatched egg. After that, the adult finches were very attentive, feeding the young frequently, and when I visited the Klefsaas on 29 July and checked the nest, the brooding adult flew off, exposing the partly feathered, healthy-looking young. On 10 August, one youngster left the nest; two days later, the remaining two took wing. Either one egg did not hatch or something had happened to one of the young. These observations give us an interesting record of how much disturbance of the nest some songbirds will tolerate. Perhaps House Finches are unusually tolerant in this regard. **W.J. Breckenridge, 5800 St. Croix Ave, N., Golden Valley, MN 55422.**

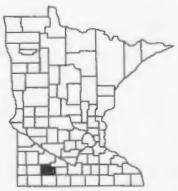
HARLEQUIN DUCKS FOUND IN JUNE BY 6-YEAR-OLD — On 9 June 1996 at approximately 8:30 P.M., while staying in Tofte, Cook County, my six-year-old granddaughter, Amanda Phillips, came in from the deck, announcing with excitement, "Grandma, there's a different duck outside!" Looking out, I was delighted to see a male Harlequin Duck not more than 50 feet from us. We watched the Harlequin for about 20 minutes while he repeatedly dove, using his wings to propel each dive, working his way along the shore within two or three feet of the rocks. The Harlequin was so close, binoculars were not necessary, but we did use them and a 20X Kowa scope for an extraordinary view. Several minutes after the male went out of sight to the northeast, a pair of Harlequins flew along the shore to the southwest. They flew close together, low to the water. The second duck was a female with no distinct markings except for pale blotches on the side of the head. Ten minutes later, one male flew by to the northeast. Several minutes after that, a pair again flew by to the southwest. We assumed we did not see the female fly northeast and can only be sure there was one pair going back and forth. Amanda and her brother Michael, age eight, relocated a male on 11 June at 8:15 P.M. when it was present in the same location for about five minutes. **Merrie Ann Rudelt, 2105 Marquis Road, Golden Valley, MN 55427.**

Editor's Note: This pair of Harlequin Ducks was also seen on 17 June, but there were no subsequent reports. Two male Harlequins were also observed on 17 and 18 June at the mouth of the French River near Duluth.

WINTER WREN BREEDING AT FLANDRAU STATE PARK, BROWN COUNTY — On an uncommonly cool 22 June 1996 forenoon I took a walk to an out of the way area in Flandrau State Park mainly to check the status of a box occupied by nesting Barred Owls. This area is low, level, and heavily wooded with grassy and weedy ground cover, next to the Big Cottonwood River. While looking for signs of life in the box I heard unfamiliar trilly "streep" calls which I soon discovered to be coming from adult and/or five juvenile Winter Wrens. An adult sang some short songs which I would compare to a House Wren's springtime practice song. I never saw two adults at one time probably because they were busy collecting insects from hidden places in the fallen rotting trees to feed to the young. The young birds were much more visible and bobbed up and down as the migrant wrens normally do, and made small attempts to pick insects off the deadwood. The young were dark brown on top, and lighter on the bottom but more so on the bottom front. I could see light bars by the rear part of the wings, and a light eyeline. On the

adult I observed also a light eyeline and darker speckly marks on the chest and bottom, and only in the small spots of sunlight coming through the treetops could I see the black bar pattern on the rear bottom. The bill was thin And straight, not as long as the House Wren's. Seldom did I hear the "ip-ip" call heard from migrants. All the birds held the short tail upwards. House Wrens occupied this entire area and so I had ample opportunities for comparisons. On this and future days I would describe the rather infrequent songs as weak, thin, & lispy, reminiscent of Song and Savannah Sparrows. One of the more distinct songs I would describe as 3 short notes followed by a trill, then "tse tse tsit" — all of it quite melodious. One call was a hard trilled "strrrip". The most common call given by young was a lispy "tsih" similar to those of other species of young birds. By 5 July the wrens had moved 100 yards to the base of the hillside and became more secretive, and I never was able to count more than four birds. On later days the male it seems, moved 200 yards along the hill bottom and by the end of July I could not see or hear any Winter Wrens. **Jack Sprenger, 615 N Jefferson St., New Ulm, MN 56073.**

WHITE-FACED IBIS IN COTTONWOOD COUNTY — On 11 May 1996, Ellis and Edna Gerber and I were traveling through Cottonwood County on our "Big Day." We stopped at Lake Augusta to have our noon lunch. After viewing warblers (mostly yellow-rumped) and a few shorebirds (Stilt Sandpipers and dowitchers), we decided to leave. Before leaving, I pointed out a dark bird on a muskrat house to Ellis, asking her to tell me what it was. I thought it was a lone cormorant at first. A second look showed a bird preening with a long decurved bill. That's an ibis! The white around the bill was visible; the body was purplish to black in color, the legs were long. A little later, it was joined by another White-faced Ibis, identical in appearance to the above bird. On Sunday, 12 May, Lester Rupp videotaped the pair of birds. They remained at Lake Augusta until 13 May. **Edward Duerksen, Box 322, Mountain Lake, MN 56159.**



Editor's Note: On 15 May 1996 William Marengo reported and documented two White-faced Ibis at Big Stone N.W.R. Lac Qui Parle County. Could these have been the same two birds as reported above?

SHORT-EARED OWL INTERACTION WITH A ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK IN ROSEAU COUNTY — Summer records of Rough-legged Hawk in Minnesota are unusual but less exceptional in recent years and perhaps more likely in northwestern Minnesota than previously appreciated. There has been at least one record in each of the past five summers and at least 14 individuals were reported from ten different counties in 1992 (***The Loon*** 65:19–20). On 6 July 1996 I discovered an immature Rough-legged Hawk in Section 19 of Grimstad Township, Roseau County and the same bird was still there two weeks later. Most exciting was an extended aerial interaction between this hawk and a territorial Short-eared Owl. The owl gave a raspy, hissing alarm call as it repeatedly "dive-bombed" the hawk which was initially perched on the ground. When the hawk took flight, the owl's behavior continued with unabated intensity. The owl always attacked fiercely from above and appeared to strike the hawk's back with its talons on several occasions. The hawk's flight appeared clumsy and lumbering, compared to the tight maneuvers of the owl. This interaction had a decidedly different outcome than a previous report (***The Loon*** 62:108) of a Rough-legged Hawk interaction with a Short-eared Owl! **Peder Svingen, 2602 E. Fourth St., Duluth, MN 55812–1533.**

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.

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The Loon

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Three Territorial Prairie Warblers In Anoka County

James L. Howitz

I was driving along a dirt road at the Cedar Creek Natural History Area in Anoka County at 1:30 P.M. on 4 June 1996 when I heard a Prairie Warbler sing from a northern pin oak woods. The exact location was East Bethel Boulevard 250m north of Anoka County Road 26. The bird was singing along the north edge of the woods, and to my surprise I heard another Prairie Warbler (Male 1) singing north of this bird (Male 2). This bird was moving rapidly around the edge of a field. On occasion, I heard a third Prairie Warbler (Male 3) singing east of Male 2 (Figure 1). I saw the field marks on both Male 1 and Male 2 and left to call Bob Janssen.

I called Bob because he had expressed great interest in seeing a Prairie Warbler in Minnesota after I had submitted a report (Howitz 1994) of a Prairie Warbler I saw on 31 May 1994. The bird I saw in 1994 was singing in the same location as Male 1. That bird sang consistently for at least one hour, but was not there the next day. Nor had he been singing when I was there the previous day (***The Loon*** 66:148).

Several observers arrived the evening of 4 June 1996 and the next day. The consensus was that three males were present on 5 June. I visited the area nearly every day in June from the 6th onwards and never found evidence of a third bird. My conclusion is that Male 3, who sang east of the other two, was not present after 5 June. Male 2 sang consistently through 16 June.

On 18 June, Bruce and Susan Fall and I mist-netted and banded Male 1 (Figure 2). We carefully searched and played tapes, but could find no other Prairie Warblers. Male 1, according to the amount of white in the retrices and their shape (Figure 3, see Pyle *et al*, p. 160, Curson *et al*, p. 145) was an after-second-year male, and so hatched in 1994 or earlier. Thus, this bird could theoretically have been the bird I saw there in 1994. After Male 2 disappeared, Male 1 expanded his territory to include that of Male 2. He continued to sing until 22 June, but I did not hear him thereafter. Male 1 was the bird seen by most of the birders who came there. I never found evidence that a female was present. The high rate of singing by the males indicated that they probably were without mates.

How long have Prairie Warblers been present at this location? I have visited this area many times in May and June since 1976, because this is part of my study area where I maintain a color banded population of Black-capped Chickadees. A check of my field notes shows that I visited this area during late May and June on 18 days in 1993, 18 days in 1994, and 17 days in 1995. It is very likely that I would have noticed a singing Prairie Warbler, especially after the 31 May 1994 bird. I am confident that any birds present during these years were there for, at most, a day or two. The Prairie Warbler activity in 1996 certainly did not occur in any of the previous 20 years. I cannot discount the possibility that one or more birds were briefly there in previous years.

I was present on Male 1's territory on 3 June 1996 and would undoubtedly have heard him, had he been singing. So

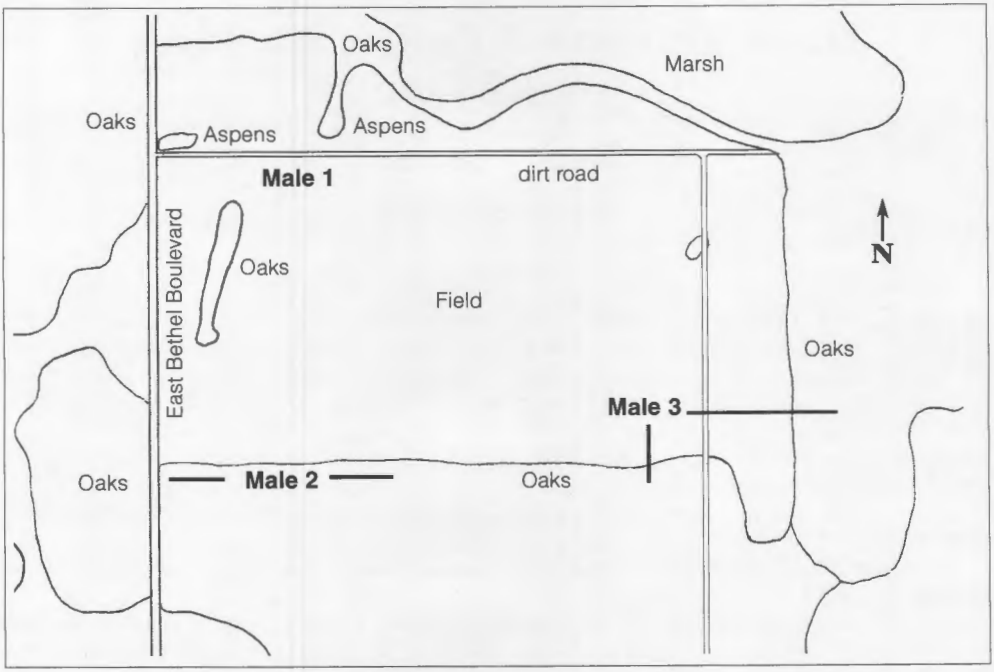

Figure 1. Map showing locations of three Prairie Warblers in Anoka County.

I conclude that the birds arrived in the area on 3 or 4 June, quite possibly together. Given the late season in 1996, the 4 June 1996 and 31 May 1994 arrival dates are suggestive that the same bird could be involved.

Numerous questions arise regarding the birds. A single Prairie Warbler in Minnesota is easily explained as lost. Three Prairie Warblers so far from the closest known breeding population is indeed perplexing. No major storm or strong winds from the south or southeast preceded their arrival and the birds should have completed migration well before June. So it is unlikely that they were blown off course.

I know of nothing remarkable about the area where the Prairie Warblers were singing. It consisted of oak woods, small aspen groves, a large field, and the edge of a large marsh. This habitat is abundant in Anoka County and elsewhere in east-central Minnesota and western Wisconsin. Most of the area is burned according to a prescribed schedule. It was burned in May 1993 and again in May 1995, and Prairie Warblers have been recorded there only in years when the area was not burned.

The nearest known breeding population of Prairie Warblers appears to be in Illinois. I could find no records of Prairie Warblers nesting in Wisconsin (Robbins 1991, Passenger Pigeon 1991–1996). Prairie Warblers are regarded as "rare" in Iowa and the birds are not known to nest regularly in the state (Dinsmore 1984). Most Prairie Warbler records from South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa are of individual singing males. Most of these were probably found because of the distinctive song. A male may remain in a location for several days, singing consistently. The birds are often "cooperative" and easily found by later birders.

The presence of three males far from the known breeding range is apparently without precedent and without ready explanation.

Figure 2. ♂ Prairie Warbler, 18 June 1996, Cedar Creek Natural History Area, Anoka County. Photo by Bruce Fall.

Figure 3. Prairie Warbler tail feathers. Photo by Bruce Fall.

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1700 Silver Lake Road, New Brighton, MN 55112.

Whip-poor-will Nest in Cass County

Michael R. North

Very few Whip-poor-will *(Caprimulgus vociferus)* nests have been found in Minnesota and adjoining states and provinces, and rarely have nests and broods been monitored to hatch or fledging. Actually, Whip-poor-wills do not build a nest, but lay their clutches on the ground. Here, I refer to those clutches as nests for simplicity. Henderson (1990) found what he believed to be the eighth known Whip-poor-will nest in Minnesota, in Houston County, in 1990. However, that was actually the eighth (or possibly ninth or tenth) nest documented since 1970 (see Wilson 1985, ***The Loon*** 57:39–49, ***The Loon*** 58:21–38, ***The Loon*** 59:19–35, Janssen 1987, and Henderson 1988). Another nest was reported from Marshall County in 1995 (***The Loon*** 68:37–57). Roberts (1932) documented seven nests in Minnesota between 1880 and 1930. There are only 15 documented nest records from Michigan (Brewer *et al.* 1991), none from North Dakota (Stewart 1975, *North Dakota Bird Notes File* 1987), one from South Dakota (Dean *et al.* 1995), at least seven from Iowa (Anderson 1907, Dinsmore *et al.* 1984, Dean *et al.* 1995), three from Manitoba, and one from Saskatchewan (Godfrey 1986), and 33 from extreme southeast Ontario, but only two probable records from northern and western Ontario (Peck and James 1983, Godfrey 1986). I could not find a definitive count of nests from Wisconsin, but there are at least a few records (Buss and Mattison 1955, Robbins 1991).

On 12 June 1996, I found a Whip-poor-will nest in Chippewa National Forest, Cass County (NE1/4 S.20, T.141N., R.30W.) in a mature deciduous forest in an area where the shrub understory was poorly developed. The incubating female flushed silently when I approached within about 2m. She flew to a nearby log and did an owl-like spread-wing display, but by leaning backwards instead of forwards (Figure 1). I easily found her two eggs lying on dead red oak leaves under a 1m tall American elm sapling. The nest site was located a few meters from a clear-cut. There was not a well-defined edge between the forest and clear-cut to which to measure distance from the nest. The nest site was appar-

Figure 1. ♀ Whip-poor-will, 26 June 1996, Cass County. Photo by Michael North.

ently typical of Whip-poor-wills. They frequently lay their eggs under overhanging saplings (Roberts 1932, Bent 1940, Buss and Mattison 1955, Brewer *et al.* 1991) near edges of forests (Roberts 1932, Dinsmore *et al.* 1984, Henderson 1990) with a build-up of oak leaf litter (Roberts 1932, Buss and Mattison 1955, Dinsmore *et al.* 1984, Henderson 1988, Robbins 1991). However, Wilson (1985) and Dean *et al.* (1995) describe some atypical nest sites.

On 17 June, the female was brooding two young, which I estimated to be about two days old, at the nest. She flushed when I was 3–4m away and flew from log to log, displaying, doing a broken-wing flutter, and giving a "chuck"-ing call. The young were flesh-colored, without spots, and blended in with the dead oak leaf litter. I continued to monitor the brood periodically through mid-July. On 20 June, the female was brooding both young within 0.5m of the nest. On 26 June, I found the female brooding only one chick, about 15m from the nest site. The female flushed and performed her usual displays. The chick had black speckling on its plumage, and it remained motionless when I approached. This chick appeared similar to ones photographed by Wilson (1985). I could not find the brood on 2 and 5 July, but on 8 July, I flushed the female and both young about 12m from the nest site, at the edge of the clear-cut. The female flushed first, and shortly thereafter both young flushed together. Both young were flying well, and the female again performed her usual displays. On 14 July, I flushed two Whip-poor-wills, again 12m from the nest site, which I believe were both the young. They flushed together, and neither displayed, as the female had always done previously. I made a cursory search of the area in the chance the female was re-nesting, but found no evidence of a second nesting attempt.

On 14 July, I estimated nest concealment from above, following BBIRD pro-

tocol (i.e. percent cover within a 25cm radius of the nest, as viewed through an ocular tube 1m above the nest), and I estimated percent total canopy cover in a 10m radius of the nest. Cover over the nest was 98% and total canopy cover was 70%.

Bent (1940) reported on the movements of one brood in New England: young first moved away from the nest (50 ft.) on their eighth day, and were found up to 100 ft. away on their 11th and 12th days. In that brood, one young was flying on its 15th day and the other on its 16th day. Brooks (1990) reported on the movements of the brood from the nest Henderson found: a single chick about one week old was found two to four ft. from the nest site, and one day later it had moved five ft. Wilson (1985) reported recently hatched chicks found on 26 July had moved 50 ft. by 2 August. Based on my observations, ornithologists who find a Whip-poor-will nest or brood and wish to monitor the brood's success should continue to search for the brood for up to one month after hatch, even if they cannot find it regularly. If the brood is still extant, repeated periodic searches should result in occasionally flushing the brood within 50m of the nest site.

This nest was found and monitored while conducting avian nest success studies in Chippewa National Forest as part of the Forest Bird Monitoring Initiative conducted by the Natural Resources Research Institute, University of Minnesota-Duluth. The study was funded by the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources.

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North Country Ecological Studies, P.O. Box 13, Moorhead, MN 56561.

Orchard Oriole and Baltimore Oriole, 19 May 1996, Aitkin, Aitkin County. Photo by Warren Nelson.

The Spring Season
(1 March to 31 May 1996)

Paul Budde, Carol Schumacher, Wally Swanson, and Tom Tustison
Foreword by Peder Svingen

Minnesota's first ***Rock Ptarmigan****, a dazzling male in Grand Marais, evaded further publicity and promptly disappeared well before its photograph was published in the Cook County News-Herald! The spring migration was lackluster in comparison, and condensed; observers who weren't birding 17–19 May missed it almost completely. The species accounts do not include a staggering array of undocumented rarities that were reported to hotlines or over the Minnesota Birding Network.*

Migration was delayed by cold temperatures persisting from the severe winter of 1995–96, retarded melting of ice on lakes, and lack of food before mid-May for leaf-gleaners and insectivores. As the northwest region finally began to thaw out, its heavy snowpack produced severe flooding which was exacerbated by heavy rains in May. When conditions finally changed, migrants came flooding into the state. The previous record for county Big Days in Minnesota (162 species in Roseau County) was smashed by two teams on 18 May during the annual Hawk Ridge Birdathon in St. Louis County; the team of Terry Brashear, Mike Hendrickson, Mark Ochs and Kim Risen reported an amazing **177 species** while another team tallied 173!

Red-throated Loons were reported from Duluth but more unusual was the one found on Hanging Horn Lake during scouting for a Carlton County Big Day. Unlikely concentrations of **Horned** and **Red-necked Grebes** were reported from flooded fields and flowing rivers in northern Minnesota, where open water was otherwise scarce. The **Clark's Grebe** was a first for Freeborn County but not far from Minnesota Lake in Faribault County, where breeding was suspected in 1994 (***The Loon*** 66:208). Unprecedented numbers of **American White Pelicans** along the North Shore of Lake Superior were undoubtedly displaced by the lack of open water elsewhere.

In contrast to last spring's poor showing, good numbers of **Snowy Egrets** were found, although only one **Little Blue Heron** was reported. The total of **Cattle Egrets** was up compared to last spring but still far below the 105 reported during the spring of 1993. Singularly startling was the Cattle Egret that flew over the mouth of the Warroad River shortly after sunset, accompanying gulls as they headed towards the middle of Lake of the Woods for roosting! All reports of the **White-faced Ibis** were from the southwest and west-central regions, where records of this Casual species are less unexpected.

Despite record cold temperatures in February, a few **Greater White-fronted Geese** arrived by early March. **Ross' Geese** were not plentiful, but they were well-distributed across five south counties. One of the three **Cinnamon Teal** reported this spring was relatively easy to relocate, an event much rarer than the species' status might suggest. Chuck Krulas and Jeff Stephenson tried to relocate an **Eurasian Wigeon** that had been reported in Goodhue County; they eventually found it in Dakota County, for a first county record! Only one **Ferruginous Hawk** was reported; during migration, Janssen (*Birds in Minnesota*, 1987) considered this species twice as likely to occur in spring. Over the past 20 years, the number of spring records (28) is less predominant than fall records (20). There were also seven June/July records during this period of time. The **Prairie Falcon** in Clay County was a good find, as this species remains an exceptional spring migrant in the state.

At first glance, it would seem impossible to predict the serendipitous discovery of Minnesota's first **Rock Ptarmigan**, apparently also a first for the "Lower 48." However, several late spring records in southern Canada provide perspective on its presence. The decline of **Sharp-tailed Grouse** in Minnesota's northwest region is particularly disturbing; this has been their stronghold despite seemingly inexorable habitat loss. **Yellow Rails** went undetected during migration and were found only in known breeding areas. Reports of the **Common Moorhen** were up significantly.

Participants in the Hawk Ridge Birdathon on 18 May will forget neither the variety of **shorebirds** (27 species, mostly at the 40th Avenue West/Erie Pier area in Duluth) nor the bizarre parade of avocets, plovers, and sandpipers riding along the North Shore of Lake Superior on ice floes! The only report of **Piping Plover** was two on the beach at Morris Point, near their last Minnesota breeding location in Lake of the Woods County. **American Avocets** invaded the state with >105 individuals reported, compared to just 13–14 birds last spring. **Willets** were reported from at least 18 counties but in smaller numbers than usual. For the second consecutive spring, four **Whimbrels** traveled off their usual migration route and were detected, this time in Aitkin County. **Hudsonian Godwits** were found in an unremarkable 11 counties while the only two **Red Knots** were both in Duluth, as usual. **Red-necked Phalaropes** were apparently scarce for unclear reasons.

The **Parasitic Jaeger** in Duluth was of interest; there are fewer than ten spring records of jaegers in Minnesota. For the third consecutive spring, the **Little Gull** was not found in Duluth! Approximately half of all Minnesota records are from Duluth, with at least one bird recorded in 16 of the past 25 spring migrations. The adult **California Gull** on the Otter Tail River in Fergus Falls was not only a first county record but also the earliest date ever in Minnesota. April appears productive for finding the **Glaucous Gull** in unusual locations; first

county records for Grant and Koochiching were established this spring. Both **Lesser** and **Great Black-backed Gulls** were reported again. My comments from last spring may be worth repeating: all should be carefully documented regardless of status, since species not yet recorded in the state may be overlooked if observers become "casual" about dark-mantled gulls.

A single **Burrowing Owl** was sighted in two adjacent counties; this declining species is Casual in the state. Remnants of their record 1995–96 invasions, **Great Gray** and **Boreal Owls** persisted far south of their usual range. Ray Glassel's knack for finding migrant **Long-eared Owls** resulted in an overdue first Waseca County record. **Short-eared Owls** were well above the ten-year spring average of sixteen birds seen in nine counties.

A total of four **Western Kingbirds** was reported along Lake Superior's North Shore in May, two each in Lake and St. Louis counties. The six **Mountain Bluebird** reports were welcome as this species continues to increase in Minnesota. Only one **Townsend's Solitaire** and only one **Varied Thrush** were fewer than anticipated in recent springs. On the other hand, ten **Northern Mockingbirds** were certainly more than expected; stay tuned for news of nesting in the summer report! Publicity about the 1995 statewide survey of **Loggerhead Shrikes** by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources resulted in an unusually high number of reports that spring; the reports from 18 counties in 1996 compares well with reports from 17–20 counties during 1992–94. Unfortunately, not enough observers give specific locations so that duplicate sightings can be avoided; this is especially a problem in Dakota County.

The previously mentioned "condensed" migration of passerines was followed by a few late dates for straggling vireos and warblers. Peak **warbler passage** occurred 14–20 May statewide, with Steve Carlson also noting a late surge of flycatchers and 12 species of warblers on 30 May in Hennepin County. A **Blue-winged Warbler** returned to Otter Tail County and another was found in Becker for a second county record; this species now occurs in northern Minnesota each spring. The singing **Yellow-throated Warbler** at Sibley State Park was undoubtedly the same individual for the third consecutive year. The famous **Kentucky Warbler** at Seven Mile Creek County Park in Nicollet County was actually not reported until summer but was presumably on territory by late May; this is the fifth consecutive year! Sadly, the reports of only two **Yellow-breasted Chats** must now be considered "above average."

One of the two **Summer Tanagers** reported was both early and unusual at any time of year, in Duluth. Echoing last spring's unprecedented invasion, **Western Tanagers** were documented from at least two locales. None of the **Spotted Towhees** was documented; the Minnesota Ornithological Records Committee (M.O.R.C.) is requesting details on all reports of this species so that its status, dates of occurrence, and distribution in the state can be accurately determined. The three **Henslow's Sparrows** at O. L. Kipp State Park were paltry compared to former numbers there but certainly better than three out of last four springs, when none were found. The **Orchard Oriole** staged a mini-invasion of its own into the north-central and northeast regions. Both **crossbills** were reported more often than usual in southern Minnesota, including the first **White-winged Crossbill nest**. Perhaps related to the harsh winter of 1995–96, **Common Redpolls** lingered late and reports of **Hoary Redpolls** were up.

Unconfirmed and Undocumented Reports:

Ibises at Marsh Lake, Lac Qui Parle Co. and in Lincoln Co.; Mississippi Kites in Anoka and Big Stone Co., Arctic Terns on Mille Lacs L., Least Tern in Winona Co., White-eyed Vireo in Rice Co., Worm-eating Warbler in Scott Co., Painted Redstart in Hennepin Co., Western Tanager in Wabasha Co., and Lazuli Bunting in Wabasha Co. This list includes only plausible reports that remain undocumented and does not include obvious misidentifications or records found Unacceptable by the M.O.R.C.

Weather Summary:

Following record cold temperatures in February, March was predictably 5.5 to 8.4 degrees F. colder than normal in all regions and it never really warmed up thereafter, even in May. The ice broke up on 18 May at Rainy Lake, the latest ice-out date recorded there since 22 May 1950. April was especially cold in the northwest and north-central regions; these were 7.4 and 6.6 degrees below normal, respectively. The statewide average for May was 3.0 degrees below normal. In fact, among 40 reporting stations summarized online by the Minnesota Extension Service Agricultural Meteorologist and the Department of Natural Resources State Climatology Office (URL: http://www.soils.agri.umn.edu/research/climatology) *all but one of these stations reported below average monthly temperatures for each month from March through May 1996*. Precipitation was generally below average the entire period, except during May in the northwest and west-central regions which both received more than one inch of rain above normal. Mostly due to melting snow, the Red River crested 17.8 feet above flood stage in East Grand Forks on 21 April. Meanwhile, light snow on 12 April in Duluth produced a new all-time record for snowfall in one season; by the end of the month, the old record of 131.6 inches set in 1949–50 was history and 133.7 inches became the new benchmark. International Falls received 9.6 inches of snow on 25 April and their new all-time record of 116.0 inches was also set.

Acknowledgments:

Many thanks to Scott Krych who stepped forward to help compile the spring and fall migration reports over the past three years when he was most needed. Bob Janssen has maintained a handwritten list of early and late dates for many years; Paul Budde constructed a computerized data base from which interpretive comments about median arrival and departure dates have been gleaned. As always, thanks to Kim Eckert and Anthony Hertzel who continue to summarize reports called in to the M. O. U. "hotlines" in Duluth and the Twin Cities. They also made suggestions that improved this foreword to *The Season*. Carol Schumacher summarized sightings posted on the Minnesota Birding Network. Terry Wiens called my attention to the online climatological summary.

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 bold 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

Red-throated Loon
All reports: 5/23 **Carlton** (first county record) MSt, 5/28 St. Louis (4) TW.

Common Loon
Reported from 30 counties in the south and 26 north counties. Early north 4/14 Kanabec BA (the ten-year median early north arrival date is 4/3). Peak 5/7 Lower Red Lake, Clearwater (300+ along one mile of shoreline) MN.

Pied-billed Grebe
Reported from 64 counties. Peak 4/19 Lake Winona, Winona County. (76) CS.

Horned Grebe
Reported from 39 counties. Early south 4/14 (ten-year median 3/24) Winona CS and Rice TB, 4/18 Anoka DJ. Peak 5/5 Hennepin (100+) SC.

Horned Grebe, 27 April 1996, Dieter Township, Roseau County. Photo by Peder Svingen.

Red-necked Grebe
Reported from 42 counties. Early south **3/30** Dakota RJ. Early north 4/18 Beltrami SCM and St. Louis (47) AE. Peak 5/4 Baudette River mouth, Lake of the Woods Co. (60) PS.

Red-necked Grebe, 4 May 1996, Lake Winnibigoshish, Cass County. Photo by Peder Svingen.

Eared Grebe
Reported from 11 south and 4 north counties. Early south 4/21 Big Stone PJ, 4/25 Pipestone JP, 4/27 Lac Qui Parle JL.

Western Grebe
Reported from 20 counties, including **4/2** (second earliest date statewide) Otter Tail SDM. Peak 4/25 Todd (200+) PKL. Unusual location 5/19 Duluth (1) PBu *et al.*

CLARK'S GREBE
Only report: **5/4 Freeborn** DN (***The Loon*** 68:174–175).

American White Pelican
Reported from 67 counties. Most reports occurred the first week of April and unusual numbers were seen along the North Shore in Lake, St. Louis.

Least Bittern, 17 May 1996, Duluth. Photo by Peder Svingen.

Double-crested Cormorant
Reported from 61 counties.

American Bittern
Reported from 25 counties. Early south 4/23 Anoka OJ and Waseca JZ, 4/25 Washington JF. Early north **4/27** (only April date) Aitkin CB. Later than average arrivals for both south and north.

Least Bittern
All reports: **5/17 Duluth** DBe, 5/19 Winona CS, HT, 5/25–26 Houston mob, 5/25 Kittson PS, 5/28 Cottonwood ED.

Great Blue Heron
Reported from 70 counties. Early north **3/11** Becker BBe; peak 4/3 Becker (100) BBe.

Great Egret
Reported from 53 counties statewide including 11 north counties. Early south **3/16** Martin BBo.

Snowy Egret
All reports: 4/25 Renville RJ, 4/27 Lac Qui Parle (4) mob, 5/4–15 Kandiyohi RE, RJF, PP, 5/11 Big Stone N.W.R., Lac Qui Parle County (2) PJ, DN, and 5/12 Washington DS.

Little Blue Heron
Only report on **4/22** from Dakota County SK.

Cattle Egret
Reported from 14 counties; minimum total of 28 birds. Early south **4/13** Martin BBo and Dakota RG, RJ; peak 4/25 Freeborn (6) ABa, 5/15 Lac Qui Parle (6) WM. 5/26 **Lake of the Woods** (1) AnH, AH, PS.

Green Heron
Reported from 36 counties.

Black-crowned Night-Heron
Reported from 21 counties.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron
No reports.

WHITE-FACED IBIS
All reports: 5/11–13 Lake Augusta, Cottonwood Co. (2) ED *et al.* (***The Loon*** 68:179), 5/12–15 Big Stone N.W.R., Lac Qui Parle Co. (1–2) SSt, WM.

Tundra Swan
Reported from 44 counties. Peak 5/7–13 Clearwater (1200+) MN.

[Trumpeter Swan]
Reported from eight south and six north counties. Early north **3/11** Becker (2) BBe, 4/8 Beltrami (1) DJo, 4/14–15 Todd (total 7) PKL, JSK, SDu. Nested in Hubbard ABo.

Mute Swan
Only reports: 4/21 Mower (1) RRK, Rice (wild?) mob.

Waterfowl

Greater White-fronted Goose
Reported from 22 counties. Early south **3/1** (ties earliest date) Olmsted (10) CK, Cottonwood ED and Jackson JCBC. Peak counts 4/9 Martin (125) BBo, 4/13 Big Stone (200+) WM. Early north 4/7 Wadena PBi, 4/20 Polk DJo, 4/21 Wilkin SDM. Unusual report 5/18 Duluth (1) mob.

Snow Goose
Reported from 34 counties. Late south 5/19 Winona CS, HT.

Ross' Goose
All reports: **3/20** Brown CMa, 4/1 Olmsted JL, 4/5–6 Dakota (2) DBS, mob (***The Loon*** 68:129–130), 4/20 **Big Stone** PJ, DN, 4/21–25 Brown RG, RJ, 4/23–**5/14** Hennepin JK, OJ *et al.* Most of these records were documented.

Canada Goose
Reported from 70 counties.

Wood Duck
Reported from 68 counties. Overwintered in several locations; most migrants reported between 3/16–29.

Green-winged Teal
Reported from 55 counties. Peak 4/13 Nicollet (1300+) TT.

American Black Duck
Reported from 19 counties. Late south 5/18 Martin BBo.

Mallard
Reported from 75 counties.

Northern Pintail
Reported from 52 counties. Earliest migrants from 3/3–17.

Blue-winged Teal
Reported from 66 counties. Early south **3/5** Cottonwood ED.

Cinnamon Teal
All reports: 4/11 Hennepin JPo, 4/13–23 Chisago NM *et al.*, 4/28 Lac Qui Parle FE. Undocumented hybrid with Blue-winged Teal 4/13 Nicollet DC, DBS, TT.

Northern Shoveler
Reported from 57 counties.

Gadwall
Reported from 52 counties.

EURASIAN WIGEON
Reported 4/14 **Dakota** (male) CK, JSt.

American Wigeon
Reported from 57 counties.

Canvasback
Reported from 57 counties. Early north 4/7–8 (ten-year median 3/25) Grant SDM, KKW.

Redhead
Reported from 57 counties.

Ring-necked Duck
Reported from 67 counties. Early south 4/4 Cottonwood ED, Martin BBo and Blue Earth LF. Early north 3/16 Douglas KKW, 3/30 Otter Tail SDM.

Greater Scaup
Reported from 38 counties. Early south 3/12 Wabasha PJ and Dakota RJ. Early north 3/11 St. Louis AE, 4/14 Aitkin WN and Clay CN. Late south **5/14** Isanti DMP.

Lesser Scaup
Reported from 66 counties. Peak 4/10 (average peak 3/30–31) Winona CS.

Oldsquaw
All reports: 3/14–4/19 Dakota (male) JDa *et al.*, 4/5 Washington (1) BSt, 5/26–28 Cook (approximate total 50 among three locations) mob.

Black Scoter
No reports.

Surf Scoter
All reports: 5/7–**5/19** Fort Snelling, Hennepin County (2 imm. males and 1 female) mob, 5/11 French Lake, Hennepin County (female) SC, and 5/16 **Dakota** (imm. male) TT.

White-winged Scoter
All reports 5/8–9 St. Louis (20) KE, NJ, 5/26 Cook (2) DN. No reports from the Mississippi River.

Common Goldeneye
Reported from 59 counties. Late south 5/15 Isanti MDP. Peak 3/27 Wright (1500+) KB.

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE
Overwintered through 3/24 Scott (male) mob.

Bufflehead
Reported from 63 counties.

Hooded Merganser
Reported from 61 counties; overwintered in the south. Early north 3/11 St. Louis AE, and 3/14 Grant KKW. Peak 3/22 Wright (75) KB.

Common Merganser
Reported from 59 counties. Late south 5/18 Lyon PJ.

Red-breasted Merganser
Reported from 50 counties. Unusual local concentration 5/4 Roseau (25) PS.

Ruddy Duck
Reported from 47 counties. Early south 3/13 Dakota KB, PJ and Rice TBo.

Vultures to Falcons

Turkey Vulture
Reported from 56 counties. Early south 3/4 Nicollett LF, 3/10 Sibley WM, 3/13 Goodhue ABo. Early north 4/4 Todd JSK, SDu, 4/7 Carlton LW and Wilkin SDM. **Note**: Please report all spring Mississippi River Valley migration counts of vultures and other raptors, as there are little data available.

Osprey
Reported from 39 counties. Early south 3/21 Fillmore NO. 4/6 Rice JL; at nest 4/8 Winona CS, 4/18 Anoka PKL. Early north 4/15 SDM; on nest 4/17 Todd JSK, SDu. **Note**: Please report spring nesting activity for *all raptors*.

Bald Eagle
Reported from 63 counties. Peak 3/14 Goodhue (250) SMh. Nest activity 4/26 Renville JL, 5/23 Sherburne LF, (no date) Hennepin SC, 5/7 (on nest) and Clearwater MN.

Northern Harrier
Reported from 66 counties. Early south 3/3 Olmsted JSt, 3/7 Brown CMa and Rock ND. Early north 3/12 Kanabec BA, Aitkin WN, Douglas SWa and Otter Tail SDM.

Sharp-shinned Hawk
Reported from 45 counties in all parts of the state.

Cooper's Hawk
Reported from 42 counties. Peak south 4/1–15 (9 reports) and 4/15–30 (total of 12 reports). Reported as common in Hennepin SC; nests found at Cedar Lake and Elm Creek Park, Hennepin Co. SC, 5/19 Hennepin DZ. Early north 3/28 Becker BBe, 4/7 Wilkin SDM.

Northern Goshawk
Reported from seven north counties. Five of the seven south reports occurred 4/6–22.

Red-shouldered Hawk
Reported from 11 south and 7 north counties. Overwintered at least in Winona CS with four seen 3/26. Also seen 5/17–18 (immatures) two locations, Hennepin Co. SC. Early north 3/30 Otter Tail SDM, 4/6 Aitkin WN, 4/9 Crow Wing PP and Becker BBe.

Broad-winged Hawk
Reported in 24 south and 16 north counties. Early south 4/16 Winona (pair on territory) CS, 4/16 Pipestone JP, 4/18 Mower RRK and Dakota RG. Most south reports between 4/26–30. Early north 4/16 Beltrami HJF, 4/19 Carlton LW and St. Louis TW.

Swainson's Hawk
Reported from 22 south but only 2 north counties. Early south 4/5 Rice JL, 4/7 Freeborn ABa, 4/14 Lincoln JA, RgS. Observed 4/21 (breeding behavior) Winona CS, SMh. Other observations in eastern counties of Rice, Freeborn, Washington, Dakota and Olmsted, besides the usual southwestern counties. All north reports: **4/7** Clay SCM, 4/21 Clay WM, 4/22 Grant SDM.

Red-tailed Hawk
Reported from 73 counties, including on nests (4) Rice JL.

Ferruginous Hawk
Only report: 4/27 Lac Qui Parle NW.

Rough-legged Hawk
Reported from 45 counties. Peak 3/30 Wilkin (50) SDM, 4/7 Aitkin (39) WN, 4/27 Roseau (50) PS.

Golden Eagle
Reported from four south counties including Winona CS, 4/14 Goodhue and Dakota (2) DBS, TT, 4/20 LeSueur RJ.

American Kestrel
Reported from 68 counties.

Merlin
Reported from 25 counties including a male *richardsonii* 3/17 Grant SDM.

Prairie Falcon
Overwintered in Hennepin mob. Only migrant 4/17 Clay CN.

Peregrine Falcon
Overwintered and reported in 17 counties.

GYRFALCON
All reports: overwintered through 3/22 in Duluth, St. Louis Co. TEB, DBS, mob.

Partridges to Cranes

Gray Partridge
Reported from 15 south and 2 north counties. Numbers remain down.

Ring-necked Pheasant
Reported from 42 south and 9 north counties. Numbers down, mob.

Spruce Grouse
All reports: 3/23 Lake JSt, 3/23 Roseau PS, 4/7 Lake SW/MS, 4/10 Roseau KB.

ROCK PTARMIGAN
First state record 5/20 Grand Marais, Cook Co. KMH *et al.* (***The Loon*** 68:79–81).

Ruffed Grouse
Reported from 10 south and 19 north counties.

Greater Prairie-Chicken
Reports and numbers up: 4/13 Wilkin (95) mob, 4/18 Otter Tail SDM, 4/20 Polk (22) SKS. Also seen at Felton Prairie, Clay Co. throughout season, mob.

Sharp-tailed Grouse
Fewer reports than last year. Total of 15 reports from Aitkin, Kittson, Koochiching, Marshall, Roseau and St. Louis. Spring lek counts down 24% from 1995 in northwestern Minnesota (MDNR).

Wild Turkey
Reported from 21 south counties, up from

15 last year.

Northern Bobwhite
Only report: (no date) Houston *fide* CS.

Yellow Rail
All reports: 5/18 St. Louis mob, 5/25 Aitkin (4) WN, 5/25 Kittson (12) PS.

Virginia Rail
Early south 4/16 Hennepin PJ, 4/18 Winona CS, 4/24 Anoka PKL. Early north 5/17 Aitkin WN, 5/18 St. Louis PBu, 5/19 Otter Tail SDM.

Sora
Early south 4/21 Houston JD, 4/27 Olmsted JSt, 4/28 Hennepin PJ and Lac Qui Parle TEB. Early north 5/2 Otter Tail SDM, 5/9 St. Louis TW, 5/11 Clay DWi.

Common Moorhen
Number of reports up. Early south 5/3 Winona CS, 5/10 Freeborn ABa, 5/15 Rice JL; also reported from Anoka, Hennepin, Houston. Only north report **5/31** Otter Tail (2) SDM.

American Coot
Overwintered in Winona (1) CS. Early south 3/3 Scott SC and Watonwan ED. Early north 4/9 Marshall SKS, 4/10 Beltrami DJo, 4/17 Clearwater SCM.

Sandhill Crane
Early south **3/13** (earliest date statewide) Anoka PKL, **3/17** Wabasha JSt, 3/23 Houston JD. Early north **3/23** Morrison RgS, 4/5 Otter Tail SDM, 4/6 Kittson PS and Crow Wing PP.

Shorebirds

Black-bellied Plover
All reports: south 5/18 Lac Qui Parle PJ, 5/19 Dakota RG, TT, 5/26 Hennepin SC; north 5/18 Clearwater ABo and St. Louis mob.

American Golden-Plover
Early south 4/26 Lac Qui Parle FL, 4/27 Yellow Medicine (23) DBM, 4/28 Dakota RG. Largest flock 5/18 Jackson (92) BBo. Early north 5/18 Clearwater ABo and St. Louis mob, 5/20 Aitkin WN and Marshall SKS.

Semipalmated Plover
Early south 4/20 Pipestone JP, 4/21 Big Stone PJ, 4/27 Dakota TT and LeSueur PBu. Early north 5/8 Clearwater ABo, 5/18 St. Louis mob.

Piping Plover
Only report: 5/26 Lake of the Woods (2) AnH, AH, PS.

Killdeer
Early south 3/9 Anoka DS, 3/11 Ramsey RH, 3/12 Houston CS. Early north 4/5 Clay RO, 4/7 Douglas SWa, 4/8 Crow Wing PP and Otter Tail KKW.

American Avocet
Over 115 birds reported from 10 south and 5 north counties. Early south 4/21 Carver DBM and Olmsted JSt, also **Kandiyohi** RJF. Peak numbers 4/27 Salt Lake, Lac Qui Parle Co. (27) FL, mob, 4/27 Lincoln (25) PJ, 5/2 Washington (min. 20) TEB. Early north **4/21** Wilkin SDM, 4/27 Traverse SDM.

Greater Yellowlegs
Early south **3/20** (second earliest date on record) Houston FL, 4/6 Murray RgS and Rice JLa. Early north 4/11 Clay DBM, 4/12 Otter Tail SDM, 4/13 Traverse WL.

Lesser Yellowlegs
Early south 3/20 Houston FL, 4/2 Dakota KB, 4/3 Pipestone ND. Early north 4/12 Otter Tail SDM, 4/20 Clay WM and Polk DJo.

Solitary Sandpiper
Early south 4/21 Rice JL, 4/24 Freeborn ABa, 4/25 Hennepin SC. Early north 5/8 Pennington SKS, 5/10 Beltrami SCM, 5/11 Clay RO.

Willet
Early south 4/24 Hennepin SC, 4/25 Wright RG, 4/26 Anoka DJe. Early north 5/2 Pine (3) RG, 5/3 **Wadena** PBi, and 5/15 Aitkin WN.

Dunlin, 19 May 1996, Duluth. Photo by Peder Svingen.

Spotted Sandpiper
Early south 4/20 Washington DN, 4/23 Rice TBo, 4/27 Lac Qui Parle mob and Olmsted JSt. Early north 5/7 Becker MN, Pennington SKS and St. Louis TW.

Upland Sandpiper
Early south **4/16** Waseca JZ, 5/8 Murray ND. Early north 5/8 Wilkin SDM, 5/13 Otter Tail SDM, 5/18 St. Louis PBu.

Whimbrel
All reports: 5/18 St. Louis mob, 5/20 **Aitkin** (4) WN.

Hudsonian Godwit
Early south 4/18 Pipestone (18) JP, 4/27 Lac Qui Parle mob, 5/10 Jackson MF. Early north 5/16 St. Louis (13) TD, 5/18 Pennington SKS, 5/26 Lake of the Woods (2) AH, PS.

Marbled Godwit
Early south 4/13 Kandiyohi RJF, 4/21 Big Stone PJ and Dakota TT. Early north 4/10 Wilkin DBM, 4/15 Pennington SKS, 4/16 Becker BBe.

Ruddy Turnstone
Early south **5/11** Big Stone LE, and 5/18 Lac Qui Parle PJ. Early north 5/18 St. Louis mob, 5/20 Marshall SKS, and 5/30 Cass SCM.

Red Knot
All reports: 5/22 St. Louis (1) MSt, 5/27 St. Louis (2) MSt, probably different birds.

Sanderling
Early south 4/25 Brown RG, RJ, 4/28 Renville PJ, 5/4 Waseca JZ. Early north 5/18 Clearwater ABo and St. Louis mob, 5/26 Lake of the Woods PS.

Semipalmated Sandpiper
Early south 4/10 Brown CMa, 4/15 Murray RgS, 4/16 Cottonwood ED. Early north 5/15 Cass SCM, 5/18 Clearwater ABo and St. Louis mob.

Least Sandpiper
Early south 4/9 Pipestone JP, 4/15 Murray

RgS, 4/16 Blue Earth MF. Early north 5/18 Aitkin WN, Clearwater ABo and St. Louis mob.

White-rumped Sandpiper
Early south 4/26 Brown DBM, 4/27 Yellow Medicine DBM, 5/11 Big Stone LE and Lac Qui Parle mob. Early north 5/18 Clearwater ABo and St. Louis PS.

Baird's Sandpiper
Early south 3/30 Murray ND, 4/6 Stevens DR, 4/9 Pipestone JP. Early north 4/21 Wilkin SDM, 5/18 St. Louis PBu, 5/26 Lake of the Woods PS.

Pectoral Sandpiper
Early south 4/5 Cottonwood ED, 4/7 Brown CMa, 4/13 Olmsted JSt. Early north 5/7 Mahnomen MN, 5/18 St. Louis TW, 5/21 Marshall SKS.

Dunlin
Early south 4/23 Rice RJ, 4/26 Brown DBM. Early north 5/18 Clearwater ABo and St. Louis TW.

Stilt Sandpiper
Early south 5/4 Pipestone JP and Watonwan DBr, 5/5 Houston DS. All north reports 5/18 Clearwater ABo and St. Louis PS, 5/20 Polk SKS.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper
Only report: 5/23 Marshall SKS.

Short-billed Dowitcher
Early south 5/5 Rice TBo, 5/10 Freeborn ABa and Jackson MF. Early north 5/17 St. Louis PBu, 5/18 Aitkin WN and Clearwater ABo.

Long-billed Dowitcher
Early south 4/17 Pipestone JP, 4/21 Brown RG, 5/4 Yellow Medicine TT. Only north report 5/22 Polk SKS.

Common Snipe
Early south **3/13** Rice TBo, **3/16** Martin BBo, and 4/2 Rock ND. Early north 4/9 Todd JSK, 4/13 Wilkin WM, and 4/17 Polk SCM.

American Woodcock
Early south 3/18 Washington DS, 3/24 Houston EMF, 3/27 Fillmore NO. Early north 4/4 Todd JSK, SDu, 4/7 Becker BBe and Otter Tail SDM.

Wilson's Phalarope
Numerous early dates south: **4/15** (ties earliest date south) Murray RgS, **4/17** Pipestone JP, 4/20 Anoka DN and Sibley RG, 4/21 Big Stone PJ and Goodhue JSt. Peak 80+ on 4/27 in Lac Qui Parle FL. Early north **4/20** Clay WM, 5/12 Aitkin WN and Crow Wing PP.

Red-necked Phalarope
Numbers down, mob. All south reports: 5/15 Lac Qui Parle WM, 5/18 Lincoln PJ, 5/21 Cottonwood (8) ED, 5/26 Hennepin (1 female) SC. Only north report 5/13 Polk SKS.

Jaegers to Terns

Parasitic Jaeger
Only report: **5/26** St. Louis (adult light morph) DBe.

Franklin's Gull
Early south 4/2 Rock ND and Dakota KB, 4/5 Pipestone JP. Early north 4/10 Polk SKS, 4/20 Otter Tail SDM and Wilkin WM.

Little Gull
No reports this spring.

Bonaparte's Gull
Early south 4/3 Washington WL, 4/10 Hennepin PJ. Early north 4/12 St. Louis NJ, 4/25 Todd JSK, SDu.

Ring-billed Gull
Reported from 37 south in the south and 22 north counties. Early south 3/7 Kandiyohi RJF. Early north 3/30 St. Louis AE. Peak 4/6 Spring Lake, Dakota Co. (30,000) KB.

CALIFORNIA GULL
Reported **3/30** (earliest date on record) Fergus Falls, **Otter Tail** (adult) SDM (***The Loon*** 68:177).

Herring Gull
Reported from 19 south and 14 north counties. Early south 3/12 Waseca JZ. Early north 3/29 Cook OSL.

Thayer's Gull
Only report: **3/29** Dakota KB, mob.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL
Reported **3/25** (earliest date on record) Rainy River, **Lake of the Woods** (adult) DS; **4/5** Burnsville landfill, Dakota Co. KB, SC and same individual 4/10–13 from Old Cedar Ave. Bridge, Hennepin Co. (third-summer) SC, PBu; 4/22 Diamond Lake, Hennepin Co. (adult) OJ.

Glaucous Gull
All reports: 3/29–4/16 Dakota mob, 4/2 Anoka KB, 4/14 Hennepin mob (all may have been the same immature bird); 4/6–4/9 **Koochiching** (max. 2 immatures) PS, KB, 4/20 St. Louis TW, 4/21 **Grant** (adult) SDM.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL
Reported **3/30** from Old Cedar Ave. Bridge, Hennepin Co. (adult) SC, KB (***The Loon*** 68:173–174).

Caspian Tern
Early south 4/25 Dakota DBS, 5/4 Hennepin PJ, 5/10 Winona CS. Early north 5/11 Aitkin CB, Morrison DT, St. Louis TW and Todd JSK, SDu.

Common Tern
Early south 4/28 Cottonwood EG, 5/7 Winona CS, 5/8 Dakota DJ and Washington DS. Early north **4/26** Todd NJ, 5/2 Pennington SKS.

Forster's Tern
Early south 4/13 Mower RRK and Scott DN, 4/14 Goodhue SC. Early north 5/3 Douglas MN, 5/4 Wadena PBi.

Black Tern
Early south 4/28 Cottonwood Co. ED, 5/4 Lac Qui Parle and McLeod TT. Early north 5/8 Aitkin WN, 5/13 Grant SDM and Polk SKS.

Doves to Kingfishers

Rock Dove
Reported from 34 south and 22 north counties.

Mourning Dove
Reported from 40 south and 19 north counties.

Black-billed Cuckoo
Early south 5/9 Winona CS, 5/17 Houston EMF, 5/18 Dakota RH and Scott DN. Early north **5/1** Beltrami SCM, 5/19 St. Louis SCM, 5/25 Becker SDM and Cass MN.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo
All reports: 5/20 Hennepin OJ, 5/25 Cass MN, 5/31 Washington TEB.

Eastern Screech-Owl
Reported from eight counties south, only Todd in the north.

Great Horned Owl
Reported from 27 south and 14 north counties; nested in Douglas SWa.

Snowy Owl
All reports: 3/5 Clay SDM, 3/9 Becker *fide* AH, 3/10 Otter Tail SDM, 3/17–20 Aitkin WN, 3/20 Wilkin SDM, 3/31 Clay CF.

Northern Hawk Owl
All reports: through 3/17 Itasca BN, 3/23 Roseau (2) PS, 3/25 Lake of the Woods PS, 4/6–10 Roseau PS, KB, 4/9 Koochiching KB.

BURROWING OWL
Reported 5/16 and 5/18 Leota Township, Nobles Co. ND, 5/28 (same bird) Moulton Township, Murray Co. ND.

Barred Owl
Reported from 14 south and 10 north counties.

Great Gray Owl
Record 1995–96 invasion; reported from at least 24 counties this season alone, including numerous unusual south reports: **Anoka, Chisago, Dodge, Freeborn, Hen-**

nepin, Isanti, Olmsted, Washington, Winona.

Long-eared Owl
Reported from five south and six north counties. First county record 3/22 **Waseca** RG.

Short-eared Owl
Excellent total of approximately 50 birds reported from seven south and five north counties. 4/19 Flandreau S. P., **Brown** JSp. Steve Millard saw 13 in just 45 minutes on 4/6 in Wilkin County!

Boreal Owl
Record 1995–96 invasion continued into spring; new reports of live birds included 3/2 Lake PN, 3/22 Beltrami JSt, 3/23 Cook OSL, 4/1 Lake SW/MS. Steve Wilson and others compiled an incredible total of **212** Boreal Owls (194 during the 1988–89 invasion); articles documenting this and the Great Gray Owl invasion are published elsewhere in this issue.

Northern Saw-whet Owl
Reported south from Anoka, Dakota, Rice and Washington; north reports from Becker, Hubbard, Lake of the Woods, Roseau and St. Louis counties.

Common Nighthawk
Early south 5/7 Waseca JZ, 5/15 Goodhue DBo and Rice TBo. Early north 5/9 Todd JSK, SDu, 5/17 Wadena ABo, 5/18 Aitkin WN and Crow Wing PP.

Whip-poor-will
Early south 5/15 Lac Qui Parle WM, 5/18 Sherburne JJB, 5/24 Winona CS. Early north 5/18 Pennington SKS, 5/21 Cook OSL, 5/25 Kittson PS, 5/28 Aitkin CB.

Chimney Swift
Early south 4/19 Hennepin SC, 4/25 Rice JLa, 4/30 Winona CS. Early north 5/7 Otter Tail SDM, 5/16 Todd JSK, SDu, 5/17 Crow Wing PP.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Early south 5/4 Winona CS, 5/10 Freeborn ABa and Jackson JCBC. Early north 5/10 St. Louis AE, 5/11 Todd JSK, SDu, 5/12 Aitkin WN.

Belted Kingfisher
Early north 4/9 Wadena PBi, 4/11 Becker BBe and Todd JSK, SDu.

Woodpeckers to Flycatchers

Red-headed Woodpecker
Reported from 27 south and 11 north counties.

Red-bellied Woodpecker
Reported from 32 south and 11 north counties.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Early south 3/23 Waseca JZ, 3/26 Murray ND, 4/9 Houston EMF. Early north 4/7 Wadena PBi, 4/10 Becker BK and Roseau KB.

Downy Woodpecker
Reported from 38 south and 23 north counties.

Hairy Woodpecker
Reported from 32 south and 24 north counties.

Three-toed Woodpecker
All reports: 3/22 Lake JSt, 4/7 St. Louis KE *et al.*

Black-backed Woodpecker
All reports: 3/15 Carlton TW, 3/26 Aitkin CB, Beltrami (3) DJo, Lake SW/MS, 5/26 Lake of the Woods (2) AnH, AH, PS.

Northern Flicker
Early north 4/10 Becker BBe, 4/11 Itasca BN and St. Louis TW.

Pileated Woodpecker
Reported from 26 south and 22 north counties.

Olive-sided Flycatcher
Early south 5/10 Hennepin TT, 5/11 Carver DBM, 5/14 Rice TBo. Early north 5/17 St.

Louis ME and Todd ABo, 5/18 Wadena PBi. Late south 5/28 Freeborn ABa, 5/31 Anoka JH and Nicollet BBo.

Eastern Wood-Pewee
Early south 5/11 Cottonwood ED, 5/12 Winona CS, 5/14 Olmsted JSt. Early north 5/16 Becker BK, 5/18 St. Louis PBu and Todd JSK, SDu.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
Early south 5/15 Olmsted JSt, 5/17 Goodhue DN, 5/18 Fillmore NO. Early north 5/18 St. Louis PS, 5/20 Itasca BN, 5/26 Aitkin CB. Late south 5/31 Brown JSp, Hennepin SC and Olmsted JSt. **Note:** These will be the last published reports of non-calling *Empidonax* flycatchers. Please be sure to indicate calling birds on your Seasonal Report forms!

Acadian Flycatcher
All reports: 5/18 Scott DN, 5/22 Ramsey (3) and Hennepin (2) AH, 5/23 Rice TBo, 5/25 Houston JSt and Scott DBo, 5/26 Houston (3) FL, 5/31 Hennepin OJ.

Alder Flycatcher
Early south 5/16 Washington DS, 5/18 Hennepin DZ, TT. Early north 5/18 St. Louis WM, 5/21–22 Polk SKS.

Willow Flycatcher
Early south 5/5 Mower RRK, 5/11 Rice JL, 5/15 Rice FKS. Early north 5/21 Polk SKS.

Least Flycatcher
Early south 5/4 Houston DN, 5/5 Hennepin DJe, OJ. Early north 5/12 Becker BBe, 5/15 Grant SDM.

Eastern Phoebe
Early south 4/2 Fillmore NO, Hennepin DBo and Houston EMF. Early north 4/8 Crow Wing PP, 4/10 Becker SDM and Otter Tail KKW.

Great Crested Flycatcher
Early south 5/14 Hennepin mob and Winona CS, 5/16 Olmsted JSt. Early north 5/17 Aitkin PBu and Becker BBe, 5/18 Cass *fide* MN.

Western Kingbird
Early south 5/19 Big Stone LE, 5/20 Benton RG, RJ. Early north 5/16 Beltrami SCM, 5/18 Clay RO and Clearwater ABo; also reported 5/26 Lake (2) *fide* KE, 5/28 **Waseca** JZ.

Eastern Kingbird
Early south 4/19 Rice OR, 4/23 Washington TEB, 5/4 Winona CS. Early north 5/13 Grant SDM, 5/14 Pennington SKS, 5/16 Beltrami SCM.

Larks to Ravens

Horned Lark
Reported from 40 south and 24 north counties.

Purple Martin
Early south 4/11 Cottonwood ED, 4/12 Freeborn ABa, 4/13 Martin BBo. Early north 4/17 Becker BBe, 4/18 Otter Tail SDM, 4/22 Aitkin CB.

Tree Swallow
Early south **3/13** Fillmore NO, 3/17 Martin DBr, 3/23 Houston JD. Early north 4/16 Aitkin WN and Wadena NJ, 4/18 Todd JSK, SDu.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Early south 4/12 Goodhue RJ, 4/13 Winona CS, 4/14 Hennepin PBu. Early north 4/21 Otter Tail WM, 5/1 St. Louis NJ, 5/3 St. Louis AE.

Bank Swallow
Early south 4/19 Winona CS, 4/25 Rice TBo, 4/28 Hennepin ABo. Early north 5/10–11 Becker BBe, BK, 5/14 Becker GS.

Cliff Swallow
Early south 4/28 Wright ABo, OJ, 5/1 Freeborn ABa. Early north 5/4 Pennington SKS, 5/5 Beltrami DJo and Wadena PBi.

Barn Swallow
Early south 4/10 Hennepin SC, 4/15 Rice JLa, 4/20 Washington DS. Early north 4/20 Kanabec BA, 4/25 Todd JSK, SDu, 4/30 Mille Lacs mob.

Gray Jay
Reported throughout the normal range plus 5/11 **Todd** JSK, SDu.

Blue Jay
Reported from 41 south and 24 north counties.

Black-billed Magpie
Reported throughout the normal range.

American Crow
Reported from 43 south and 28 north counties.

Common Raven
Reported throughout the normal range plus 3/23 **Houston** (first county record) DK (***The Loon*** 68:177), 4/7 **Wilkin** SDM, 4/27 Sherburne SPAS.

Chickadees to Gnatcatchers

Black-capped Chickadee
Reported from 44 south and 24 north counties.

Boreal Chickadee
Reported throughout the normal range.

Tufted Titmouse
All reports: 3/30 Fillmore *fide* CS, 5/27 Winona JSt, Fillmore NO, Houston EMF, KE, Winona CS, KE.

Red-breasted Nuthatch
Reported from 23 south and 24 north counties.

White-breasted Nuthatch
Reported from 40 south and 19 north counties.

Brown Creeper
Reported from 29 south and 14 north counties.

Carolina Wren
No reports.

House Wren
Early south 4/5 Freeborn ABa, 4/19 Houston EMF, 4/28 Hennepin SC. Early north 5/11 Todd JSK, SDu, 5/13 Grant SDM, 5/15 Otter Tail SDM.

Winter Wren
Early south 4/2 Brown JSp, Hennepin CG and Winona CS. Early north 4/18 Carlton LW, 4/19 Becker BBe, 5/4 Aitkin WN. Late south 5/12 Hennepin DJe, 5/14 Rice JL, 5/15 Jackson JCBC.

Sedge Wren
Early south reports 5/5 Waseca JZ, 5/7 Hennepin SC and Rice TBo. Early north 5/9 St. Louis TW, plus 5/16 Aitkin CB and Cass *fide* MN.

Marsh Wren
Early south 5/2 Rice TBo, 5/5 Lincoln JA, RgS. Early north 5/16 Beltrami SCM, 5/18 Otter Tail SDM, 5/23 Clay CN.

Golden-crowned Kinglet
Early south 4/2 Dakota KB and Rice TBo, 4/4 Watonwan DBr. Early north 4/8–10 Becker BBe, 4/18 Carlton LW. Late south 5/8 Jackson JCBC, **5/12** Dakota TT and Hennepin SC.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Early south 4/2 Fillmore NO, 4/5 Freeborn ABa and Hennepin SC. Early north 4/14 Clay MN, WM, 4/20 Carlton LW. Late south 5/25 Ramsey TT, 5/26 Hennepin SC, 5/28 Brown JSp.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Early south 4/24 Hennepin TT, 4/26 Houston EMF, 4/27 Freeborn ABa. Early north 5/26 Morrison MJ/DT, 5/29 Otter Tail SDM; also reported 5/16 Big Stone CMa, 5/18 Benton RJ, 5/18 Kandiyohi RJF.

Bluebirds to Thrashers

Eastern Bluebird
Early south 3/10 Rice OR, and 3/12 Houston EMF, FL. Early north 3/16 Kanabec CN, 3/22 Todd JSK, SDu and Wadena PBi.

Mountain Bluebird
All reports: (no date) Kandiyohi *fide* RJF,

3/14–15 **Todd** JSK, 3/16–17 **Martin** BBo, 3/20 (captured by a high school student while the bird was catching flies near a window!) Marshall SKS, 3/23 Grygla, Marshall County *fide* BSi, 4/6 Kittson JR, and **5/5 Kanabec** KR.

Townsend's Solitaire
Only report: (no date) Rice Lake State Park, Olmsted Co. DA, *fide* AH.

Veery
Early south 5/4 Winona CS, and 5/5 Hennepin DZ. Early north 5/8 Carlton ESH, 5/9 Beltrami SCM and Todd JSK, SDu.

Gray-cheeked Thrush
Early south 5/5 Brown JSp, 5/6 Rice TBo, and 5/7 Hennepin RJ. Early north 5/7 Becker BBe and Pennington SKS, plus 5/11 Todd JSK, SDu. Late south 5/26 Brown JSp and Nicollet LF, 5/30 Mower RRK. Late north 5/20 Cass MN, 5/21 Crow Wing LF, 5/22 Beltrami DJo.

Swainson's Thrush
Early south 5/1 Ramsey LF, 5/3 Brown JSp and Rice TBo. Early north 5/6 Becker BBe, 5/7 Pennington SKS, 5/10 Beltrami DJo. Late south 5/26 Brown JSp, 5/29 Mower RRK, 5/30 Hennepin (5) SC.

Hermit Thrush
Early south 4/3 Freeborn ABa, 4/4 Hennepin SC and Rice JL. Early north 4/16 Clay CN, 4/18 Carlton LW. Late south 5/14 Hennepin SC, 5/21 Blue Earth MF.

Wood Thrush
Early south 4/16 Hennepin OJ, 5/1 Washington DS, and 5/3 Fillmore NO. Early north 5/14 Carlton LW, 5/16 Aitkin CB, 5/18 and St. Louis TW. Nest found in Cass County MN.

American Robin
Reported from a total of 42 counties in the south and from 27 north counties.

Varied Thrush
Only report: **4/19–26** (latest north date) Pennington GMa, SKS.

Gray Catbird
Early south 4/28 Cottonwood ED, 5/3 Houston EMF, 5/5 Hennepin DJe. Early north 5/8 Polk SKS, 5/12 Wadena PBi, 5/15 St. Louis mob.

Northern Mockingbird
All reports: 4/19 Blue Earth MF, 5/12 Lac Qui Parle FE, 5/16 Clay DWi, 5/18 St. Louis DBe *et al.*, 5/19 Hennepin TT, 5/19 (same bird may have been at this location for three consecutive years) Kandiyohi RJF, 5/23 Beltrami (2) GS, 5/26 St. Louis BT, *fide* SS, 5/27 Cook OSL.

Brown Thrasher
Early south 4/18 Hennepin SC, 4/9 Fillmore NO and Waseca JZ. Early north 4/28 Crow Wing PP, 5/1 Otter Tail SDM, 5/4 Douglas SWa.

Pipits to Vireos

American Pipit
All reports: **3/24** Dakota CBr *fide* AH, 4/27 Todd JSK, SDu, 5/13 Grant SDM, 5/14 Hennepin SC, 5/15 Red Lake SKS, 5/19 St. Louis PBu, 5/23 St. Louis SS.

Bohemian Waxwing
Reported only from eight north counties: Aitkin, Beltrami, Kanabec, Morrison, Pennington, Red Lake, Roseau and St. Louis. Largest concentration 3/23 Roseau (250) PS. Late north 5/2, 5/4, 5/5 St. Louis *fide* KE, ME, TW, respectively.

Cedar Waxwing
Reported from 28 south and 13 north counties.

Northern Shrike
Late south 3/30 Houston JD, 4/1 Yellow Medicine SDM, 4/9 Watonwan BBo. Late north 4/15 Aitkin CB, 4/17 Todd JSK, SDu, 4/19 St. Louis TW.

Loggerhead Shrike
Early south 3/12 Anoka PKL and Brown JSp, 3/16 Dakota RH; nested in three Dakota Co. locations WL. All north reports: **3/11** Pine DW, 5/11 Todd JSK, SDu, 5/17

Morrison (3) WM, 5/18–19 St. Louis TD *et al.* Grand total of 13 counties in the south and 5 north counties; minimum of 35 individuals.

European Starling
Reported from 42 south and 18 north counties.

Bell's Vireo
Early south 5/15 Rice TBo, 5/21 Wabasha JD, FL, 5/24 Winona CS. Also reported from Dakota and Blue Earth counties.

Solitary Vireo
Early south 4/28 Hennepin DJe, 5/4 Rice TBo, 5/5 Hennepin SC. Early north 5/4 Douglas SWa, 5/11 Aitkin WN and Crow Wing PP. Late south 5/20 Anoka DZ, 5/26 Hennepin SC and Scott TT.

Yellow-throated Vireo
Early south 4/28 Kandiyohi mob, 5/13 Winona CS, 5/14 Hennepin SC. Early north 5/12 Douglas SWa, 5/16 Cass DaC *fide* MN, 5/19 Carlton LW.

Warbling Vireo
Early south 5/13 Winona CS, 5/15 Freeborn ABa, 5/16 Hennepin TT. Early north 5/18 St. Louis TW and Wadena PBi, 5/19 St. Louis AE.

Philadelphia Vireo
Early south 5/16 Mower RRK, 5/17 Hennepin OJ and Rice TBo. Early north 5/18 Carlton LW and St. Louis TW, 5/20 Itasca BN. Late south 5/28 Brown JSp and Dakota RG, 5/30 Hennepin SC.

Red-eyed Vireo
Early south 5/14 Rice TBo, 5/16 Anoka JH, 5/17 Houston EMF. Early north 5/17 Cass MN, 5/18 Douglas SWa and Wadena PBi.

Warblers

Blue-winged Warbler
Early south 5/14 Winona CS, 5/16 Rice TBo, 5/18 Freeborn ABa. Early north 5/29 Becker BBe, 5/29 (same location as the previous year) Otter Tail SDM.

Golden-winged Warbler
Early south 5/15 Hennepin SC, 5/16 Freeborn ABa and Olmsted JSt. Early reports north on 5/19 Aitkin CB, WN, and 5/20 Carlton LW.

Tennessee Warbler
Early south 5/9 Hennepin SC, 5/10 Hennepin PBu, 5/12 Hennepin TT. Early north 5/15 Cass MN, 5/18 Carlton LW and Otter Tail SDM. Late south 5/29 Hennepin PBu, 5/30 Brown JSp, 5/30 Hennepin (12+) SC.

Orange-crowned Warbler
Early south 4/21 Hennepin TT, 4/24 Hennepin SC, 4/25 Murray ND. Early north 5/6 Clay RO, 5/9 St. Louis TW. Late south 5/23 Hennepin SC and Washington WL, **5/28** (second latest south date) Pipestone JP. Late north 5/23 Clay DWi and Beltrami GS, 5/26 Lake of the Woods AnH, AH, PS.

Nashville Warbler
Early south 5/4 Winona CS, 5/5 Mower RRK, 5/11 Hennepin SC. Early north 5/11 St. Louis SS, 5/15 Carlton LW and Cass MN.

Northern Parula
Early south 4/28 Hennepin TT, 5/4 Hennepin DBo, DBS. Early north 5/18 Carlton LW, 5/19 Aitkin CB and Cass MN. Late south 5/21 Mower RRK, 5/24 Washington WL, 5/26 Brown JSp.

Yellow Warbler
Early south 5/4 Freeborn DN, Hennepin SC and Winona CS. Early north 5/13 St. Louis AE, 5/14 Douglas SDM, 5/15 Beltrami DJo.

Chestnut-sided Warbler
Early south 5/14 Rice TBo and Winona CS, 5/15 Mower RRK. Early north 5/14 St. Louis SW/MS, 5/18 Cass DaC *fide* MN and Pennington SKS.

Magnolia Warbler
Early south 5/11 Winona CS, 5/12 Dakota DBS and Houston JSt. Early north 5/16 Cass DaC, *fide* MN and Todd JSK, SDu. Late south 5/28 Brown JSp, 5/29 Pipestone JP, 5/30 Hennepin SC.

Cape May Warbler
Early south 5/10 Mower RRK, 5/11 Winona CS, 5/12 Winona JSt. Early north 5/15 St. Louis AE, 5/16 Aitkin CB, 5/17 Otter Tail SDM. Late south 5/20 Hennepin SC, 5/25 Anoka DN and Hennepin TT.

Black-throated Blue Warbler
All reports: 5/18 Dakota RH, 5/19 Anoka PKL, 5/21 Anoka CF, 5/23 Lake SW/MS, 5/26 Lake (5) DN, 5/27 Lake DN.

Yellow-rumped Warbler
Early south 4/10 Hennepin SC and Rice OR, 4/11 Rice JL. Early north 4/9 Beltrami SCM, 4/13 Todd JSK, SDu, 4/14 Clay WM. Late south 5/25 Hennepin TT, 5/28 Washington DS, **5/30** Hennepin SC.

Black-throated Green Warbler
Early reports south on 5/4 Houston DN and Winona CS, 5/5 Hennepin RJ. Early north reports 5/11 Becker BBe, 514 Carlton LW, 5/17 Clearwater NJ. Late south 5/19 Hennepin DN, 5/22 Hennepin SC, 5/26 Scott TT.

Blackburnian Warbler
Early south 5/7 Winona CS, 5/13 Fillmore NO, 5/15 Freeborn ABa. Early north 5/14 St. Louis AE, 5/17 Cass MN. Late south 5/26 Cottonwood ED and Hennepin DZ, 5/30 Hennepin SC.

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER
Only reports: **4/28**–5/5 (singing male returned for the third consecutive year) Sibley State Park, Kandiyohi Co. mob, 5/19 Minnesota River Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Hennepin Co. TT.

Pine Warbler
Early south 5/4 Hennepin DBS and Winona CS, 5/7 Chisago RH. Early north 5/6 Becker BBe, BK, 5/11 Wadena PBi.

Palm Warbler
Early south 4/27 Hennepin TT, 4/28 Washington JF, 5/2 Hennepin DBo. Early north 4/28 Aitkin CB, 5/4 Carlton LW, 5/5 Wadena PBi. Late south 5/20 Anoka DZ and Hennepin TT, 5/23 Hennepin SC.

Bay-breasted Warbler
Early south 5/16 Olmsted JSt and Winona CS, 5/17 Goodhue DN. Early north 5/18 Todd JSK, SDu, 5/19 Carlton LW, 5/20 Cass MHa, *fide* MN. Late south 5/19 Hennepin DN, 5/24 Hennepin DBM, 5/25 Anoka DN.

Blackpoll Warbler
Early south 5/4 Hennepin OJ, 5/7 Watonwan ED, 5/11 Goodhue DZ. Early north 5/15 Becker BK, 5/16 Cass MN and Todd JSK, SDu. Late south 5/27 Hennepin PBu, 5/30 Hennepin SC and Lac Qui Parle FE. Late north 5/22 Wadena GS, 5/26 Lake of the Woods PS, 5/30 Cass MN.

Cerulean Warbler
Early south 5/18 Freeborn ABa and Scott DN, 5/22 Brown JSp; no reports north.

Black-and-white Warbler
Early south 4/20 Rice JL, 4/28–29 Washington JF, TEB. Early north 5/2 Hubbard RSm, 5/6 Becker BBe, BK.

American Redstart
Early south 5/10 Fillmore NO, 5/11 Hennepin SC and Winona CS. Early north 5/12 Wadena PBi, 5/14 Douglas SWa, 5/15 Beltrami DJo.

Prothonotary Warbler
Early south 5/11 Goodhue DZ, 5/14 Blue Earth MF, 5/15 Goodhue DBo; also (no date) Freeborn ABa, 5/18, 5/29 Fillmore NO.

Ovenbird
Early south 5/4 Houston DN, 5/6 Jackson JCBC, 5/7 Rice TBo. Early north 5/7 Otter Tail SDM, 5/8 Polk SKS, 5/9 Todd JSK, SDu.

Northern Waterthrush
Early south 4/28 Big Stone CS, HT, 4/29 Winona CS, 5/2 Freeborn ABa. Early north 5/9 Todd JSK, SDu, 5/11 Carlton LW and Clay RO. Late south 5/27 Anoka (2) TT and Hennepin PBu, 5/28 Pipestone JP.

Louisiana Waterthrush
All reports: 4/19 Winona CS, 5/4 Houston (4) DN, 5/17 Fillmore NO, 5/26 Houston (4) FL.

Kentucky Warbler
Only report: 5/20 **Scott** *fide* AH.

Connecticut Warbler
Early south 5/18 Scott DN and Benton RJ, 5/19 Hennepin TT. Early north 5/20 Cass *fide* MN and St. Louis SW/MS, 5/25 Becker SDM. Late south 5/23 Brown JSp and Rice TBo, 5/30 Hennepin SC.

Mourning Warbler
Early south 5/9 Freeborn ABa, 5/16 Winona (10) CS, 5/17 Hennepin PJ. Early north 5/17 Beltrami DJo, 5/18 Clay CN, RO, CSp, Todd JSK, SDu and Wadena PBi. Late south 5/28 Wright RJ, 5/30 Hennepin (6) SC.

Common Yellowthroat
Early south 5/4 Rice TBo, 5/7 Pipestone JP, 5/11 Goodhue JSt, DZ. Early north 5/7 Clearwater MN, 5/16 Beltrami SCM, GS.

Hooded Warbler
Early south 5/9–11 Faribault, Rice Co. TBo, RG, 5/12 Cedar Lake, Hennepin Co. SC, 5/18 Scott DN.

Wilson's Warbler
Early south 5/5 Waseca JZ, 5/8 Hennepin SC, 5/12 Dakota DBS. Early north 5/16 Cass MN and Todd JSK, SDu. Late south 5/30 Hennepin PBu, SC and Rice TBo. Late north 5/24 Aitkin CB, 5/26 Clay RO.

Canada Warbler
Early south 5/15 Jackson BBo, 5/16 Olmsted JSt. Early north 5/18 Todd JSK, SDu and Wadena PBi. Late south 5/27 Anoka TT and Winona FL, 5/30 Hennepin SC, 5/31 Brown JSp.

Yellow-breasted Chat
All reports: 5/26 Beaver Creek S. P., Houston Co. KE *et al.*, 5/26 Cannon River Wilderness Area, Rice Co. JL.

Tanagers to Snow Bunting

Summer Tanager
All reports: **5/5**–10 (second earliest north date) St. Louis *fide* KE, "late May" Olmsted JTh.

Scarlet Tanager
Early south 5/16 Olmsted JSt and Winona CS, 5/17 Goodhue DN, DZ and Murray ND. Early north 5/16 Pennington and Polk SKS, 5/18 Kanabec BA and Wadena PBi.

Scarlet Tanager, May 1996, Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge, Becker County. Photo by Betsy Beneke.

WESTERN TANAGER
All reports: 5/15–20 Wealthwood, Aitkin Co. CMG, mob, 5/18 International Falls, **Koochiching** JeH.

Western Tanager, 18 May, 1996, near Mille Lacs Lake, Aitkin County. Photo by Warren Nelson.

Northern Cardinal
Reported from 32 south and 6 north counties. Interesting north reports included a male which overwintered in **Roseau** (BSi) and increasing numbers in St. Louis (KE).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Early south 5/1 Hennepin TT, 5/3 Houston EMF. Early north **4/9** (earliest date statewide) Aitkin WN, 5/11 Todd JSK, SDu and Wadena PBi.

Blue Grosbeak
No reports.

Indigo Bunting
Early south 5/11 Cottonwood ED, 5/12 Fillmore NO and Washington DS. Early north 5/14 Aitkin WN and Becker BBe, BK, 5/17 Polk SKS and St. Louis PBu.

Dickcissel
Early south 5/9 Jackson JCBC, 5/15 Murray and Rock ND.

Eastern Towhee
Early south 4/21 Houston EMF, 4/24 Mower RRK, 4/26 Hennepin TT. Early north 5/9 Todd JSK, SDu, 5/17 Polk SKS, 5/18 Aitkin WN.

SPOTTED TOWHEE
Early south 5/5 Lincoln JA, RgS, 5/7 Cottonwood ED (no details on either record).

American Tree Sparrow
Late south **5/13** Hennepin DBo, **5/15** (second latest date south) Houston EMF and Pipestone JP. Late north 5/3 Aitkin CB, 5/4 Clay DWi, 5/18 St. Louis TW.

Chipping Sparrow
Early south 4/5 Cottonwood ED, EG, 4/11 Hennepin SC, Houston EMF and Lac Qui Parle FE. Early north 4/17 Hubbard HJF, 4/19 Becker BBe, 4/27 St. Louis SW/MS.

Clay-colored Sparrow
Early south 4/28 Yellow Medicine WM, 4/29 Winona CS, 5/1 Hennepin SC. Early north 5/4 Douglas SWa, 5/5 Wadena PBi, 5/8 Otter Tail SDM, Polk SKS and Wilkin SDM.

Field Sparrow
Early south 3/29 Hennepin *fide* AH, 3/30 Dakota (3) TT, 4/11 Hennepin SC and Winona CS. Early north 5/5 Polk SKS, 5/11 Todd JSK, SDu, 5/13 Becker BBe. Also 5/31 **Red Lake** SKS.

Vesper Sparrow
Early south 4/6 Rice JLa, 4/10 Brown JSp and Hennepin SC, OJ. Early north 4/14 Grant SDM, 4/15 Clay CN, 4/19 Todd JSK, SDu.

Lark Sparrow
Early south 4/13 Waseca JZ, 4/28 Anoka JH, 5/2 Goodhue DBS. Early north 4/30 **St. Louis** NJ, 5/5 Polk SKS, 5/7 Becker BBe.

Lark Bunting
No reports.

Savannah Sparrow
Overwintered through 3/1 Hennepin OJ (***The Loon*** 68:128). Early south 3/30 Rice FKS, 4/13 Waseca JZ. Early north 4/21 Wilkin WM, 4/27 Wadena PBi, 5/2 Otter Tail SDM and St. Louis AE.

Grasshopper Sparrow
Early south 5/11 Cottonwood ED, 5/15 Hennepin OJ, 5/17 Wabasha DN. Early north 5/8 Otter Tail SDM, 5/11 Todd JSK, SDu, 5/18 Clay RO.

Henslow's Sparrow
Only report: O. L. Kipp S. P., Winona Co. (as many as three birds) KE, mob.

LeConte's Sparrow
Early south 5/4 Brown JSp, 5/16 Big Stone WM, PS and Swift WM. Early north 5/2 Otter Tail SDM, 5/5 Wadena PBi, 5/8 Wilkin SDM.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow
No reports.

Fox Sparrow
Early south 3/16 Olmsted JSt, 3/24 Fillmore NO, Houston EMF and Murray ND. Early north 4/6 Todd JSK, SDu, 4/10 Aitkin WN and Kittson KB. Peak migration in the northwest region occurred around 4/20, with 20

birds in Kittson and 15 in Roseau (PS). Late south 5/2 Hennepin DBo, 5/4 Cottonwood ED. Late north 5/3 Aitkin CB, 5/8 Polk SKS.

Song Sparrow
Early north 4/7 Wilkin SDM, 4/9 Kanabec CM. Reported from 40 counties south.

Lincoln's Sparrow
Early south 4/12 Mower RRK, 4/13 Nicollet LF, 4/15 Murray RgS. Early north 5/8 Clay RO, 5/14 St. Louis TW, 5/15 Itasca BN. Peak movement in Twin Cities on 5/14 (SC). Late south 5/20 Fillmore GS, 5/21 Hennepin SC, 5/28 Brown JSp.

Swamp Sparrow
Early south 3/24 Hennepin TT, 4/5 Freeborn ABa and Rice JL. Early north 4/20 Polk DJe, 4/21 Otter Tail WM and Wilkin SDM.

White-throated Sparrow
Early south 3/1 (overwintered) Freeborn ABa, **3/12** Hennepin DZ, 3/19 Dakota DBS. Early north 4/6 S. Louis AE, 4/15 Crow Wing PP, 4/18 Aitkin WN. Peak north migration 5/9–18. Late south 5/21 Wabasha JD, 5/23 Hennepin SC, 5/25 Washington DS.

White-crowned Sparrow
Early south 4/15 Murray RgS, 4/26 Anoka DS and Kandiyohi RJF. Early north 4/25 St. Louis TW, 4/30 Aitkin WN, 5/6 Becker BBe. Late south 5/20 Brown JSp, 5/21 Wabasha JD, 5/25 Mower RRK. Late north 5/19 Aitkin PP, 5/20 Mille Lacs RJ, 5/25 St. Louis TW.

Harris' Sparrow
Early south 4/5 Pipestone JP, 4/12 Lac Qui Parle FE, 4/15 Murray RgS and Washington WL. Early north 4/30 Aitkin WN, 5/5 Wadena PBi, 5/6 Becker BBe. Late south 5/18 Hennepin SC, Lac Qui Parle PJ and Lincoln JA, RgS, **5/28** Pipestone JP. Late north 5/20 Cass RJ, Kanabec BA and St. Louis TW.

Dark-eyed Junco
Late south 5/15 Washington WL, 5/16 Hennepin TT, 5/26 Cottonwood ED. Reported from 22 counties north, with peak movement between 4/10 and 4/16.

Lapland Longspur
Late south 4/13 Cottonwood (1,000) DBS, TT and Redwood DBS, 4/15 Winona CS, 4/25 Hennepin SC. Late north 5/19 St. Louis PBu, 5/26 Lake of the Woods AnH, AH, PS.

Smith's Longspur
No reports.

Chestnut-collared Longspur
Early north 5/4 Felton Prairie, Clay Co. *fide* AH.

Snow Bunting
Late south 3/23 Rice (225) JL, 4/12 Hennepin OJ. Late north 5/11 Carlton ESH, 5/18 St. Louis DBe, **5/26** (ties latest north date) Aitkin WN.

Blackbirds

Bobolink
Early south 4/29 Lincoln JA, RgS, 5/5 Mower RRK and Rice JL. Early north 5/11 Wadena PBi, 5/12 Douglas SWa, 5/13 Marshall SKS.

Red-winged Blackbird
Early north 3/15 Douglas SWa and Otter Tail SDM, 3/16 Douglas and Grant KKW. Reported from 44 counties south.

Eastern Meadowlark
Early north 4/13 Aitkin WN and St. Louis AE. Reported from 26 counties south.

Western Meadowlark
Early north 3/20 Otter Tail SDM, 3/23 Becker BBe, 3/27 Pennington SKS. Reported from 30 counties south.

Yellow-headed Blackbird
Early south 4/5 Freeborn ABa, 4/13 Big Stone LE, Cottonwood (18) TT and Stevens WM. Early north 4/10 Otter Tail SDM, 4/15 Clay CN, CSp, 4/20 Two Harbors, Lake Co. *fide* KE, Douglas KKW and Traverse DN.

Rusty Blackbird
Early south 3/8 Winona CS, 3/12 Dakota DBS, 3/13 Renville CMa. Early north 3/15 Grant SWa, 4/10 Kittson KB, 4/11 Aitkin CB and Clay (200) DBM. Late south 5/5

Four finches, (American Goldfinch, Purple Finch, House Finch and Common Redpoll), 15 April 1996, Circle Pines, Anoka County. Photo by Jim Rataczak.

Kandiyohi PP, 5/7 Hennepin SC. Late north 4/29 Aitkin CB, 5/5 Wilkin SDM.

Brewer's Blackbird
Early south 3/25 Houston EMF and Kandiyohi RJF. Early north 4/10 Kittson KB and Polk SKS, 4/14 Itasca BN.

Common Grackle
Early north 3/15 Douglas SWa, 3/23 Kanabec CM and Roseau PS. Reported from 45 counties south.

Brown-headed Cowbird
Early south 3/16 Rice JLa, 3/17 Dakota TT, 3/23 Houston CS. Early north 4/12 Aitkin WN, 4/14 Grant SDM and St. Louis SW/MS.

Orchard Oriole
Early south 5/14 Murray ND, 5/15 Goodhue DBo, 5/16 Freeborn ABa and Olmsted JSt. Early north 5/17 Becker BBe, 5/18 Clay DWi. Unusual locations 5/18 **Aitkin** WN and **Duluth**, St. Louis Co. AH, PH, PS. First county records 5/22 **Carlton** *fide* KE, (no dates) **Cass** and **Crow Wing** *fide* PP, 5/21 **Itasca** BN.

Baltimore Oriole
Early south 4/28 Fillmore NO, 5/5 Washington WL, 5/10 Cottonwood ED. Early north 5/11 Aitkin WN and Becker BBe, 5/12 Douglas SWa and Wadena PBi.

Finches to Weaver Finches

Pine Grosbeak
Late north 3/19 Beltrami SCM, 3/23 St. Louis TW, 4/6 Aitkin WN. No south reports.

Purple Finch
Late south 5/15 Goodhue DBo and Hennepin SC, 5/18 Fillmore NO and Scott DN. Reported from 20 counties north.

House Finch
Reported from 36 south and 24 north counties.

Red Crossbill
All reports: 3/2 Anoka JBe, 3/3 Anoka PKL, 3/12 Lake FL, 3/12–5/31 Fillmore NO, 3/23–25 Hennepin DZ, 3/27 Wadena PBi, 4/9 Ramsey TT, 5/24 Otter Tail SDM.

White-winged Crossbill
More reports than usual, including attempted nesting in Rice (***The Loon*** 68:86–89) JLa, JL and in Dakota TT. Late south 4/21 Brown JSp and Hennepin TT, 5/5 Lincoln JA, RgS. Reported in all from seven south and five north counties.

Common Redpoll
Late south 4/16 Anoka JBe and Isanti DMP, **5/11** (2nd latest south date) Sherburne JJB. Late north 5/22 Itasca BN, **5/23** St. Louis CL.

Hoary Redpoll
All south reports 3/4–**4/10** Lyon RgS, 3/11 Anoka JBe. North reports from Aitkin, Beltrami, Kanabec, Kittson, **4/20** St. Louis MH, **4/24** Becker BBe.

Pine Siskin
Reported from 31 south counties, where birds lingered later and in greater numbers than in past few years, plus 19 north counties.

American Goldfinch
Reported from 38 south and 21 north counties.

Evening Grosbeak
Reported from 15 north counties.

House Sparrow
Reported from 41 south and 17 north counties.

Corrections to The Season:

Delete **Greater Prairie-Chicken** from Cass on 7 November 1995 (***The Loon*** 68:97). Add **Semipalmated Sandpiper** late south 10/7 McLeod KB, to Fall 1995 report (***The Loon*** 68:99). Add **Bonaparte's Gull** 11/13 Aitkin (200) KB, to Fall 1995 report (***The Loon*** 68:100). Add **Groove-billed Ani** (***The Loon*** 68:172–173) to Fall 1995 report. Records of **Eastern Wood-Pewee** and **Olive-sided Flycatcher** were inadvertently omitted from the Fall 1995 seasonal report. Delete **Painted Bunting** 24 May 1995 (***The Loon*** 67:228).

Observers

BA	Betty Ammerman
DA	Diane M. Anderson
JA	Jared P. Anez
KB	Karl Bardon
SB	Sue Barton
ABa	Al Batt
JBe	Joe Beck
TEB	Tom & Elizabeth Bell
BBe	Betsy A. Beneke
DBe	David R. Benson
FKB	Frank & Kathi Berdan
PBi	Paul J. Binek
JBl	Jo Blanich
TBo	Tom F. Boevers
BBo	Brad Bolduan
ABo	Al Bolduc
DBo	Don A. Bolduc
TBr	Terry P. Brashear
RB	Richard G. Brasket
CBr	Clemens Brysky
EBK	Ed Brekke-Kramer
DBr	Diane Brudelie
JJB	Jerry & Jared Bucksa
PBu	Paul Budde
CB	Cindy Butler
MB	Mike Butterfield
DC	Dave Cahlander
SC	Steve Carlson
DaC	David Cohen
DCo	Donna Compton
CDC	Carol & Don Crust
JDa	Jeff Dains
JD	Jeff B. Dankert
TD	Tim Dawson
SD	Steve Deger
LD	Lowell Deede
ND	Nelvina DeKam
ED	Ed Duerksen
SDu	Sue Durrant
KE	Kim R. Eckert
FE	Fred A. Eckhardt
DEd	Dudley L. Edmondson
MEi	Mardene Eide
BE	Bob Ekblad
VE	V. John Ella
LE	Lane Ellwanger
RE	Ron A. Erpelding
MEt	Matthew A. Etter
DEv	David Evans
ME	Molly Evans
AE	Audrey L. Evers
BF	Bruce A. Fall
THF	Tom & Helen Ferry
LF	Lawrence W. Filter
HJF	Herbert & Jeanette Fisher
TF	Troy C. Flicek
EMF	Eugene L. & Marilynn H. Ford
CF	Cole Foster
RJF	Randy & Jean Frederickson
MF	Merrill J. Frydendall
JF	J. S. Futcher
CMG	Clare & Maurita Geerts
EEG	Edna & Ellis Gerber
RG	Ray A. Glassel
RRG	Roger & Ruth Granberg
JG	Janet Green
CG	Charlie Greenman
JHa	Jay E. Hamernick
MHa	M. M. Hammer
JeH	Jeff Hardwig
KH	Katie V. Haws
KHe	Kathy Heidel
MH	Mike Hendrickson
AnH	Ann Hertzel
AH	Anthony Hertzel
PH	Paul Hertzel
JHe	Joel Hessen
KMH	Ken & Molly Hoffman
RH	Robert E. Holtz
JH	James L. Howitz
MDH	Marilyn & Don Hultgren
JCBC	Jackson County Bird Club
NJ	Nancy A. Jackson
CJ	Coralie A. Jacobson
RJ	Robert B. Janssen
PJ	Paul Jantscher
DJe	Douglas Jenness
RJe	Robert Jessen
ALJ	Andrea & Lowell Johnson
DJo	Douglas P. Johnson
KJ	Karen Johnson
MJ/DT	Murdoch Johnson & Dianne Tuff
OJ	Oscar L. Johnson
MK	Martin Kehoe
JK	Joe Kelly
BK	Byron R. Kinkade
RRK	Ron & Rose Kneeskern
JSK	John & Susan Kroll
CK	Chuck A. Krulas
SK	Scott Krych
MKu	Margaret Kuchenreuther
DK	Dennis R. Kuecherer

PKL	Pat & Ken Lafond
JLa	Jacob Langeslag
CL	Carla Larson
Fl	Fred Lesher
BL	Bill Litkey
JL	Jon Little
WL	William H. Longley
OSL	Orvis & Sandy Lunke
CMa	Craig R. Mandel
WM	William Marengo
DBM	Dennis & Barbara Martin
SLM	Suzanne & Lyle Mathews
GMa	Grace Mayta
SM	Spencer Meeks
SMh	Scott A. Mehus
CM	Craig Menze
AM	A. Steven Midthune
SDM	Steve & Diane Millard
MCBS	Minnesota County Biological Survey
MDNR	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
DM	Darryl S. Moen
JM	John Morrison
SCM	Steve & Carol Mortensen
BMu	Bonnie Mulligan
DN	David F. Neitzel
BN	Bill Nelson
WN	Warren Nelson
GN	Gary E. Nielsen
CN	Connie M. Norheim
MN	Michael R. North
MO	Mark Ochs
RO	Robert O'Connor
DO	Dan Orr
CO	Connie L. Osbeck
GO	Gary Otnes
NO	Nancy Overcott
JP	Johanna Pals
PP	Pam Perry
DMP	Daphne & Meyers Peterson
JPo	Jim Pomplun
JRa	Jim Rataczak
DR	Donna Rieckmann
KR	Kim W. Risen
JR	John A. Rominski
OR	Orwin A. Rustad
LR	Loiel S. Ryan
SPAS	St. Paul Audubon Society
DiS	Dick Sandve
DSa	Deb Savageau
ESH	Eileen Schantz-Hansen
JSc	John Schladweiler
BS	Bruce Schmidt
SS	Steven Schon
RRS	Rick & Robyn Schroeder
RbS	Robert Schroeder
RgS	Roger Schroeder
CS	Carol A. Schumacher
BSe	Blaine Seeliger
JS/MN	Jean Segerstrom & Mark Newstrom
JSe	Julian P. Sellers
GS	Gary Simonson
BSi	Beth Siverhus
RSm	Rolf C. Smeby
DBS	Drew & Becky Smith
KS	Kiki Sonon
TS/JB	Thom Soule & Janet Boe
DS	Dave P. Sovereign
JSp	Jack Sprenger
CSp	Carol A. Spurbeck
MSt	Mark Stensaas
JSt	Jeff Stephenson
SKS	Shelley & Keith Steva
BSt	Bill Stjern
FKS	Forest & Kirsten Strnad
SSt	Steve Stucker
PS	Peder Svingen
BT	Bill Tefft
JT	Jo Theye
DT	David W. Thurston
HT	Howard C. Towle
TT	Tom Tustison
FDU	Frank & Dorothy Ubel
DV	Dan Versaw
MV	Mary Ellen Vetter
SWa	Stuart Wagenius
JW	Jesse T. Wallace
DW	Don Wanschura
JoW	Jo Ward
LW	Larry A. Weber
NW	Nick Wedge
SWe	Steve Weston
KKW	Kristine & Kyle Wicklund
TW	Terry P. Wiens
DWi	Dennis D. Wiesenborn
JJW	Jim & Jude Williams
SW/MS	Steve Wilson & Mary Shedd
GW	Gerald E. Winkelman
SWi	Sylvia Winkelman
NW	Ned Winters
PW	Paul Wise
EW	Evy Withers
MW	Mary Wyatt
BY	Ben Yokel
JZ	James E. Zimmerman
DZ	Dave C. Zumeta
mob	many observers

Three Additional Mississippi Kite Records from Hawk Ridge

Frank J. Nicoletti

While conducting the daily hawk count at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve, Duluth, St. Louis County, I observed juvenile Mississippi Kites in each of the years of 1992, 1993, and 1996. These three records follow an observation of an adult Mississippi Kite at Hawk Ridge on 30 August 1991 (***The Loon*** 63:282–283), plus a probable adult seen over Marshall School in Duluth on 23 September 1986 (***The Loon*** 59:58).

The first of the Mississippi Kites I observed was on 15 September 1992 at 10:40 A.M. Weather conditions at the time were east winds at 10–15 mph, overcast skies, and the temperature around 60 degrees. Several other birders were present at the time, but only one of them, Tim Dawson, also saw the bird well.

Shortly after showing several hawk watchers how to identify a Peregrine Falcon at a distance, I saw a bird appear out toward Lake Superior. The first thought by several folks and myself was that this would be another Peregrine, but then we saw it flap with deep, stiff wing beats, accelerate, and suddenly stall in mid-air and capture a dragonfly. It then sailed leisurely on while eating the dragonfly. I immediately knew that it was a Mississippi Kite. I turned to view the kite through my scope (Bushnell Spacemaster 20X) and was able to observe it for several minutes before it disappeared to the southwest. Through the scope, I watched it eat two more dragonflies and was able to distinguish the kite as a juvenile.

The following is a description of the identifying features observed and noted shortly after the sighting. It was a medium-sized, falcon-shaped raptor, about the size of a male Peregrine Falcon. Its body was slender, not "chesty" or "barrel-bellied" as a peregrine or Merlin. The wings were long and slim, showing longer "hands" than "arms," especially when gliding. When soaring, the wings tapered much like a Broad-winged Hawk. Its flight was graceful and effortless, as it was hanging and quartering in the wind, unlike that of a peregrine's strong flight and whip-like flap. The tail was flared both when it was closed and fanned. Light tail bands were seen, similar to those of an adult Red-shouldered Hawk and Merlin. The plumage overall was darkish on both the upperparts and underparts. The underparts were heavily streaked against a buffy tone. The underwing coverts were a rich reddish-brown that contrasted with darker flight feathers. When the bird banked, I could see a lightish area on the under wing surfaces, especially on the outer primaries.

The second Mississippi Kite was observed on 5 September 1993, at 12:40 until 1:20 P.M. This individual was observed hawking and feeding on dragonflies, predominantly Green Darners, during a major movement of dragonflies up and down the Lester River Valley. Other observers included Joel Hessen and Laura Erickson, both of whom have seen this species before. Weather conditions were southwest winds at 10–20 mph, partly sunny skies, and temperatures in the mid-50s.

I spotted this falcon-sized raptor gliding down toward Lake Superior and noticed its size to be that of a small Peregrine Falcon. Of the three Mississippi Kites, this one was observed for the longest period of time and was more closely studied. After about 40 minutes, it eventually disappeared to the west over the ridge. Its pursuit of dragonflies, shape, manner of flight, and plumage characteristics were essentially the same as in the

1992 kite. The only exception was that the tail was unbanded, unlike the 1992 juvenile; this feature, normally associated only with adult Mississippi Kites, also occurs on a small percentage of juveniles (Brian Wheeler, pers. Comm.).

The third kite was observed on 9 September 1996, at 10:07 A.M. The skies were partly cloudy, with light southwest winds and temperatures in the low 60s, and no other observers were present. It was the first seen to the northeast towards the Lester River, as it kited in the wind and hawked for dragonflies. It was in view for about five minutes through my Kowa TSN–4 30X spotting scope before disappearing to the west behind the ridge. Its behavior, shape, size, and plumage (with streaked underparts, narrowly banded tail, and darker flight feathers) were again similar to the other two Mississippi Kites, except that its underparts were lighter in tone, not as rich buff, and its head was paler than the other two.

The identification of these Mississippi Kites was straightforward for me, since I have gained extensive experience with Mississippi Kites of all ages, and similar species such as Merlins and Peregrine Falcons, during a total of 30 seasons as official counter or bander at various migratory hawk lookouts and while assisting the authors of hawk identification guides with their field work.

I thank Kim Eckert for his assistance in the preparation of this manuscript.

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American Kestrel and Merlin Migration Correlated with Green Darner Movements at Hawk Ridge

Frank J. Nicoletti

Migrating hawks have been counted each fall at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve, Duluth MN, since 1951, with counts standardized since 1972. There have been well over a million hawks counted since the beginning, with yearly counts ranging from 34,000 to 149,000 (Eckert and Evans, 1995). Weather conditions on the western shore of Lake Superior collect and funnel raptors as well as other birds along the lake shore before they disperse past Duluth in a southerly direction. The weather conditions that concentrate these migrants usually occur on days when wind has a westerly component and skies are clear to partly cloudy; this usually follows the passage of a low pressure system (Mueller and Berger 1961, Haugh 1970). Another striking phenomenon resulting from these same dynamics is the concentrated migration and/or large, local movement of dragonflies, butterflies and other insects.

Several species of dragonflies are known to migrate, with the best known and by far most abundant species at Hawk Ridge being the Green Darner (*Anax junius*). The Green Darner is believed to occur in Canada and the northern United States as both resident and migratory populations (Trottier 1971, Walker 1958). The resident population breeds during the summer, overwinters as larvae, and emerges the following spring. The migratory population arrives from the south and breeds in the spring, their offspring emerge during late summer of the same year, and migrate south

during August and especially September before attaining sexual maturity. The fall southward migration is considerably larger than the spring northward migration and has long attracted the attention of naturalists (Shannon, 1916, 1955). Although most of the data collected on the migration of this species have come from the Atlantic seaboard down through the Gulf of Mexico (May 1993), inland migrations have been reported from Point Pelee, Ontario (Walker 1955), and Hawk Mountain, Pennsylvania. Dragonfly migration in Duluth is one of the most conspicuous natural events each fall, but it has not been described or quantified prior to this study.

I have conducted the hawk count since 1991 and have noted large movements of dragonflies as have other observers (Doolittle, 1992; M. and D.L. Evans, L. Erickson, per. comm.). Observations up to this point have been anecdotal, both at Hawk Ridge and at other locations. In 1995, I counted Green Darners migrating past the ridge during September, using the same methods used to collect hawk data, as part of the North American Dragonfly Migration Project (May & Soltesz, 1993). This project provides the first standardized count data of migrating dragonflies in North America. The dragonfly migration project is trying to coordinate hawk watch sites throughout the country to further understand dragonfly movements.

The purpose of my study was to quantify the Green Darner migration at Hawk Ridge and to learn if this movement was related to the hawk migration. My previous observations at this lookout site as well as lookout sites at other migration concentration points indicated that the American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) and Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) catch and eat darners during migration. Many studies have considered predator-prey interactions on the breeding grounds, but few studies quantify the relationship between predator and prey during migration, except Aborn (1994), who found a correlation between raptor and songbird numbers at East Ship Island off the coast of Mississippi, a migration stopover site.

Methods

During the September 1995 study period, I counted between 8:00 to 5:00 C.S.T. every day, taking a few hours off during days of inclement weather, for a total of 245.0 hours. Weather data was transcribed from broadcasts by the National Weather Service station at Duluth Airport, approximately seven miles west of the ridge. When local conditions differed from the weather report, notes were taken. Only hawks and darners moving from a northerly to southerly direction were counted, so the handful of local individuals would not affect the migration count. While scanning the sky with binoculars (10X50 Leica BA), hawks and darners were counted independently on separate mechanical clickers. I collected the following weather data every hour: temperature, wind speed and direction, humidity, barometric pressure, per cent cloud cover, and form of precipitation if any. Each hour I recorded the number of individuals of each species of hawks, the total number of dragonflies, and specifically the number Green Darners. I also kept record of the numbers of kestrels and Merlins I observed feeding on dragonflies. (Every prey dragonfly that I was able to see clearly enough to identify was a Green Darner.)

Green Darners were much more difficult to count than migrating hawks. The small size of insects obviously limits the range in which they are visible, especially against a hazy midday sky. On some days, darners west of the ridge were low enough to be obscured by vegetation. I was clearly counting only a small percentage of the Green Darners moving past the ridge.

Results

American Kestrel

During September 1995, 1106 kestrels and 10,330 Green Darners were observed migrating past Hawk Ridge (Figure 1). In general, days with good numbers of fal-

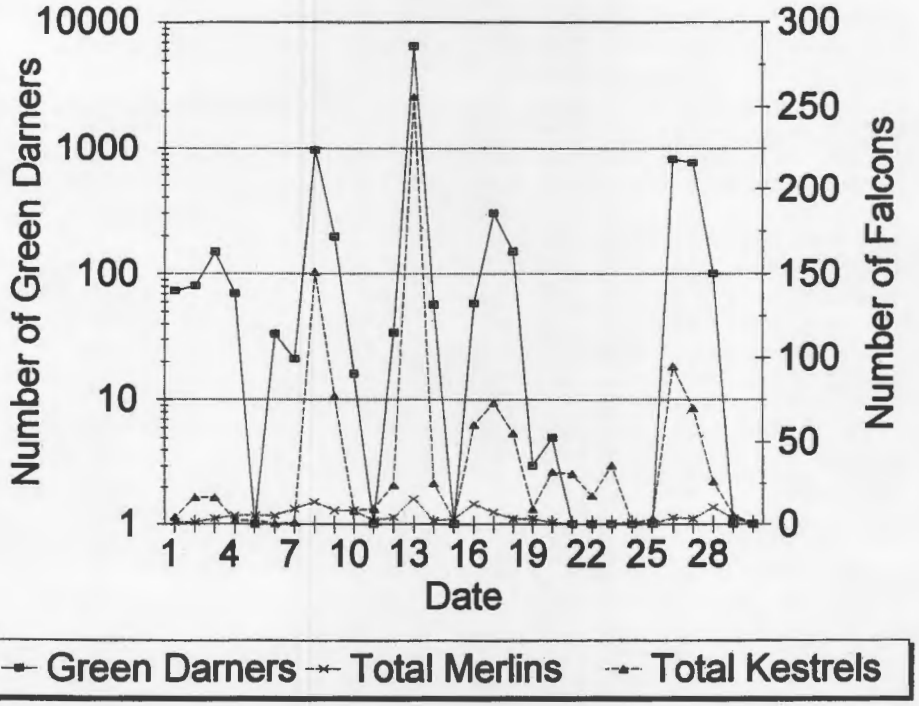

Figure 1. Total numbers of Green Darners, American Kestrels, and Merlins observed daily during September, 1995.

cons also had good numbers of darners, except 19–24 September, when temperatures stayed in the 30s and 40s and rain and drizzle were common, and virtually no darners were counted, though 100 kestrels were counted. Interestingly, I noted that a high percentage of these kestrels migrating during this cold spell were adults, identified by signs of active molt in their flight feathers. During this time, several birders reported many non-migrating kestrels on Minnesota Point, a sandy barrier island at the southwestern tip of the lake. These birds were observed hunting from perches and feeding mainly on large grasshoppers.

Of kestrels observed during September, 28.8% were observed feeding on darners as they migrated past the ridge. The percent of kestrels feeding during each hour ranged from none the first hour (0700–0800 CST) to 73% in late afternoon (1700–1800 CST). The percentage of kestrels feeding increased as the day progressed, even though the total number of kestrels decreased in late afternoon (Figure 2). Although this was a clear general trend, on some individual days with lackluster migration, the percentage of feeding kestrels peaked earlier.

Merlin

During the study, 131 Merlins were observed migrating past Hawk Ridge (Figure 1). Of the September Merlins, 14% were observed to be hunting or feeding on darners as they moved past the ridge. The relationship between Merlin and darner numbers was not clear as with kestrels. This is consistent with the fact that Merlins hunt birds more than kestrels do.

Other Raptors

Over the years, some other species of hawks have been observed feeding on

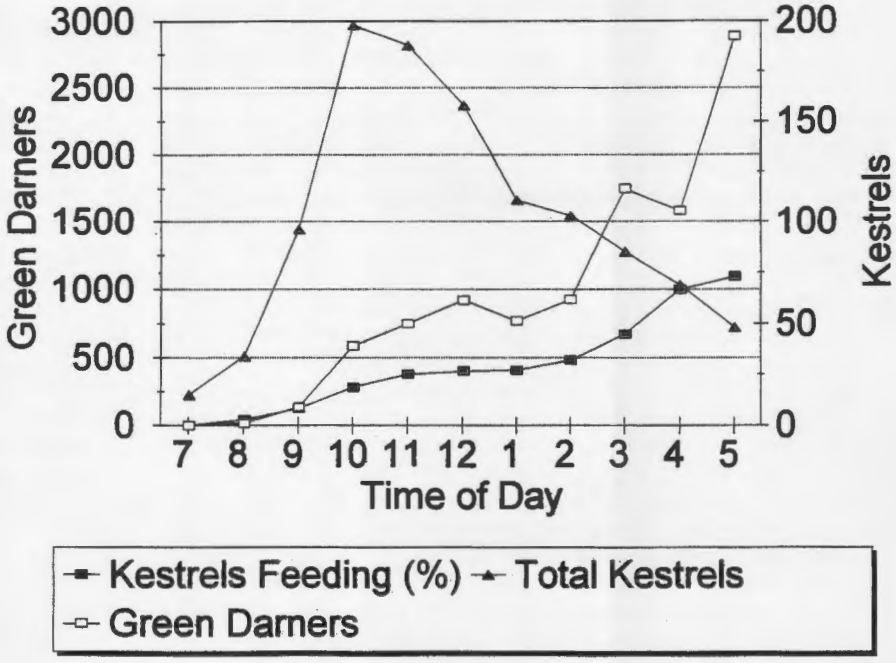

Figure 2. Total numbers of Green Darners and American Kestrels counted during each 1-hour time period during September, 1995, and percentage of kestrels actually feeding on darners.

dragonflies over Hawk Ridge, though they were not part of this study. Over my years as a counter, I have seen a few Sharp-shinned Hawks (*Accipiter striatus*) and Peregrine Falcons (*Falco peregrinus*) taking dragonflies, and each of the three Mississippi Kites (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) that has been recorded at Hawk Ridge was observed taking dragonflies. The Mississippi Kite seen on 5 September 1994 spent a full 45 minutes hawking for dragonflies, taking dozens and dozens, though observers were too spellbound to quantify or identify to species the dragonfly take. It does not appear that other raptors use this food source during migration.

Discussion

In midday, when weather conditions were optimal for migration, kestrels and Merlins were more often seen migrating than feeding, but as afternoon progressed and numbers of kestrels decreased, the percent seen feeding rose dramatically (Figure 2). The behavior of Green Darners changed dramatically over the course of the day as well. Few were observed before about nine in the morning, after which the numbers steadily increased, especially on warm days. During midday when conditions were best for falcon migration, the darners were also presumed to be migrating, but fewer were counted during this period, perhaps because they were too far up to see, especially in a hazy midday sky. This biases the total number of darners observed because it was more difficult to see high flying insects, but they were obviously there because I often observed kestrels and Merlins catching them. Later in the day the darners again were flying lower, moving much more slowly, and were seen feeding on swarms of midges as they moved through.

Typical late afternoon weather conditions (reduced winds and the sun's lower angle) normally result in decreased lift from thermals, which probably has the same effect on darner migration as with hawk migration. Late in the day, as the percent of feeding falcons increased, there was also a dramatic increase in the number of darners an individual bird was observed to take. During morning and midday, a bird might be observed taking one or two while it was in view, while late in the afternoon they were sometimes seen taking eight or ten. During late afternoon, both kestrels and darners were usually seen flying right above the ridge, presumably where the day's dwindling thermal air currents and updrafts still provided some lift. (This is also where midges seemed to concentrate in late afternoon.) When the wind direction switched to come in off the lake with a more southerly or easterly direction, darners were driven closer to the ridge and to the west, and kestrels were observed following the same movements and feeding heavily on the dragonflies. Kestrels were obviously using Green Darners as a major part of their prey base.

Not all days were typical. On days when the highest percent of feeding kestrels was counted at midday as opposed to late afternoon, the migration typically cut off early due to wind or rain. When winds were not the best for migration, kestrels seemed to take advantage of lower-flying darners to increase their feeding. Birds still migrated with less than optimum conditions, but appeared to follow the darners more heavily on these days.

Some observers reported seeing early morning movements of dragonflies along the shore which were not observed from the ridge. During passerine migration counts at the Lakewood Pumping Station, about three miles northeast of Hawk Ridge on the shoreline, dragonflies are frequently observed feeding on mosquitoes at dawn (L. Erickson, per. comm.) At night, dragonflies including darners may gather close to the lake, where temperatures are milder on cold nights, and where mosquitoes and other prey insects are more abundant. Once they've fed in the morning, darners may draw closer to the ridge to migrate as the day proceeds. Green Darner movements increased as temperatures increased and as wind direction shifted to a more westerly direction.

My theory is that both adult and immature kestrels use Green Darners as a primary migration food source, with immature birds even more dependent on them than adults. In September 1995, during peak darner migration, we counted 88% of the kestrels counted between September and November. The few kestrels still moving in October were mostly adult males. Immatures, which are fed many insects in the nest and catch insects as their primary food base after fledging, lack experience hunting birds and mammals, and probably key in more on insects, which are more abundant and familiar, and easier to manage. As a bander, I have noted that kestrels (both adults and immatures) are very difficult to lure into a bal-shaltre trap with mice as bait during late summer because they are too focused on insect prey. They probably maintain this focus as they begin migration, following the prey base they are used to, not normally switching to more difficult prey items until late fall and winter when cold temperatures force them to search for warm-blooded prey.

Merlins are specialized bird hunters, and the timing of their migration, with over 50% of the total number counted during October and even November, indicates that they depend primarily on warm-blooded prey. However, 14% of the Merlins migrating past Hawk Ridge during September were observed to be feeding on dragonflies, indicating that this insect is a significant secondary food source.

One current hypothesis to explain the timing of hawk migration is that each species follows the prey base most useful for fueling its migration flight. There is also speculation that raptors migrate along coastlines to take advantage of eas-

ily captured prey (Kerlinger 1989). Aborn (1994) on East Ship Island off the coast of Mississippi observed 14% of Merlins and 6% of Peregine Falcons pursuing songbirds, and 8% of the Merlins with recently killed prey. Favorable weather conditions are known to be responsible for congregating both predators and prey. At Hawk Ridge, topography and September weather patterns produce the physical conditions for a concentrated kestrel migration, and the abundant darners clearly provide the prey base to fuel this flight.

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The 1995–96 Influx of Northern Owls

Kim R. Eckert

Beginning in Fall 1995 and continuing into early Spring 1996, unusually high numbers of all four northern owls were recorded in Minnesota. Of these, the season totals of both Boreal Owls *(Aegolius funereus)* and Great Gray Owls *(Strix nebulosa)* were higher than in any previous winter on record. And while it was not a record season for Northern Hawk Owl *(Surnia ulula)* and Snowy Owl *(Nyctea scandiaca)*, there had only been a few previous winters which had recorded higher numbers for these two species.

As with the previous five accounts of winter owl invasions I prepared for publication in this journal (***The Loon*** 64:189–195, 63:163–167, 61:115–117, 56:143–147, and 50:63–68), the total numbers of owls in this article represent what are considered to be separate individuals. Duplicate sightings of what are believed to be the same individual are not counted in these totals, and, while it is possible that a few owls were counted more than once, this number is negligible when one considers the number of individuals undetected or unreported.

In several cases, subjective decisions had to be made in determining whether an owl sighting represented a new individual or not. Such decisions depended

on how sedentary or transient the owls tended to be at the time, on the number of miles and number of days between sightings, and on how frequently the area in question was being covered by birders. In any event, since the same compiler has been determining totals of individuals in the same consistent manner during this and the previous five invasion years, the numbers arrived at each year are meaningful and can be compared.

I. Boreal Owl

As reported by Steve Wilson in an article which appears elsewhere in this issue, a record total of 212 Boreal Owls was recorded, with 176 of these individuals found dead or dying. Since Wilson's account completely addresses this owl's situation during last winter, there is no need to repeat that information here, and the reader is accordingly referred to that article.

II. Great Gray Owl

In all, the total number of Great Gray Owls recorded in the state during the season was determined to be a record high 342 individuals; this number does not include individuals seen in spring which were thought to represent nesting birds. The earliest Great Gray which was considered to be part of this influx was on 29 September in the Sax-Zim Bog area of St. Louis County. This report was followed by two others elsewhere in Sax-Zim in October, and a third October Great Gray was seen in central Lake County. Several new Great Grays (at least 14 individuals, of which 11 were found dead) were still being reported for the first time during the first half of April, along with several others which had first been seen earlier in the season.

Following the few earliest Great Grays mentioned above, ten individuals were initially seen in November, but it was not until mid-December when it was clear a major irruption was underway, at least in northeastern Minnesota. Dozens of owls turned up then, especially in the Sax-Zim Bog (indicated on Figure 1 by the dashed rectangle) and in the vicinity of Duluth. Eight Great Grays were included on the 16 December Duluth Christmas Bird Count (CBC), but much more significant was that no fewer than 28 Great Grays were counted on the 18 December Sax-Zim CBC — an all-time record for any North American CBC. In all, the season total in the Sax-Zim area was determined to be 45 individuals, and in Duluth and vicinity there were about 40 (see Figure 1).

Also, as shown in Figure 1, about 60 individual Great Grays were concentrated in Aitkin County during the season, an area where this species consistently breeds and winters. According to Warren Nelson, who, along with Cindy Butler, kept track of the locations of owls in that county, the influx began there in mid-January and peaked during February. On 11 February, Warren observed 16 individuals in the northern half of the county along County Roads 1, 5 and 18. Then on 24 February, no fewer than 35 Great Grays were seen along these and two other nearby county roads, of which 29 individuals were observed by Warren alone. The number of Great Grays remained steady in northern Aitkin County through March and into early April: Warren again saw 16 owls on both 2 and 20 March, and he was still able to find 14 individuals on 6 April. Six Great Grays were observed in a single field on 14 April, when pair bonding was first observed.

One of the most significant aspects of last winter's Great Gray Owl irruption was certainly the record number of individuals in southern Minnesota. As shown in Figure 1, over 50 owls reached the southern half of the state, all in the southeastern quarter of Minnesota. The first to be seen there were on 31 December in Wabasha County and at Wild River State Park in Chisago County, and at least eight were first seen during January. The influx in southern Minnesota occurred in earnest during February when at least 30 Great Grays were discovered; an additional ten or so were found in March.

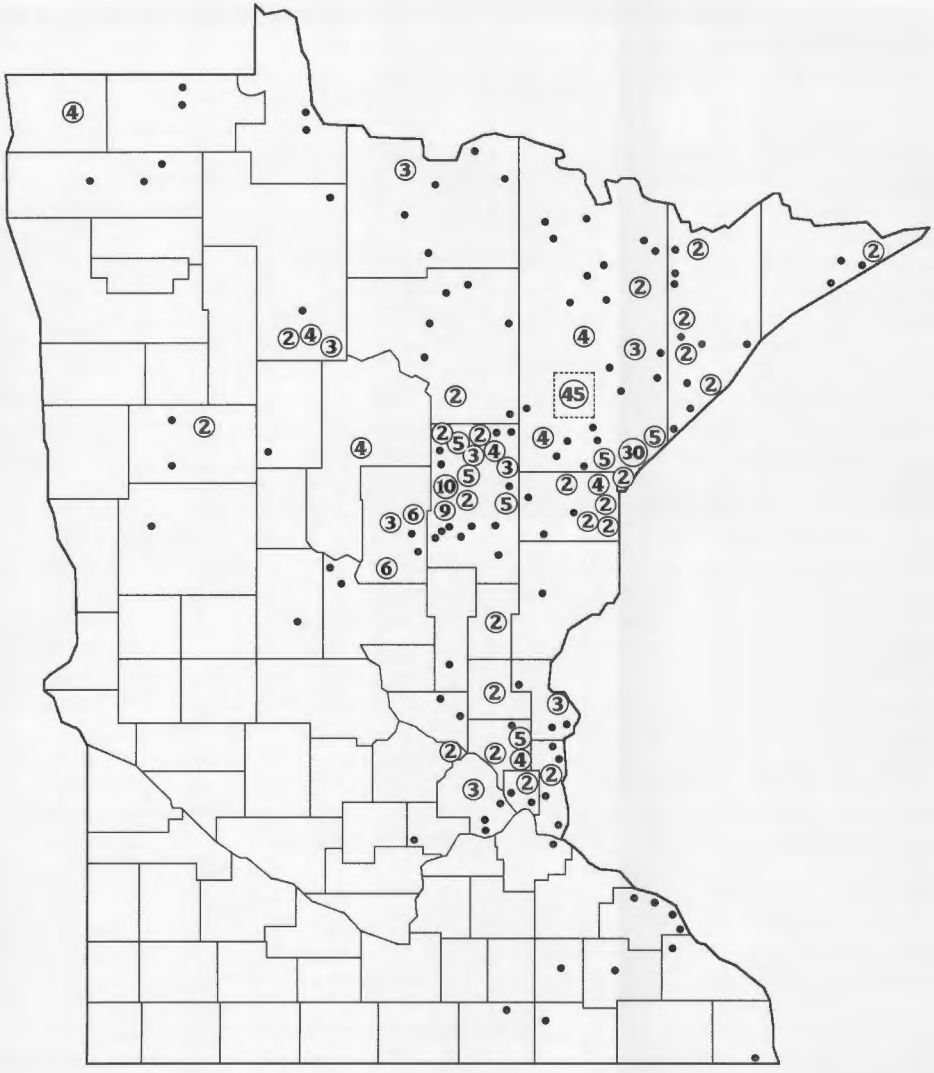

Figure 1. Locations of Great Gray Owl records, Winter 1995–96, • = one individual, ⓝ = more than one individual.

There has been only one other winter when significant numbers of Great Gray Owls were documented in southern Minnesota: in 1968–69, about 33 individuals were reported, 27 of these in the Twin Cities area (***The Loon*** 41:36–39). During the six other documented Great Gray incursions (in 1965–66, 1977–78, 1983–84, 1988–89, 1990–91 and 1991–92) the number of individuals reaching southern Minnesota has varied between zero and four (***The Loon*** 38:44–45, 50:63–68, 56:143–147, 61:115–117, 63:163–167 and 64:189–195).

As documented in the seven articles cited in the previous paragraph, the number of Great Grays reported in each of those earlier irruption winters was well

short of this season's record total of 342 individuals. Previously, the record number for a season was in 1991–92 when 218 were counted, most of these in St. Louis and Lake counties. The Great Gray totals in 1990–91, 1988–89 and 1983–84 were similar to each other (134, 115 and 122 individuals respectively), and the three previous irruption winters each recorded fewer than 100 individuals. Note that it was especially difficult this season to arrive at a total of individual owls, especially in Aitkin and St. Louis counties where so many were concentrated. However, 342 remains a reasonably accurate approximation, one which is consistent with — and can be compared to — the counts in previous years. Note as well that a few of the Great Grays included in this total may have actually been Barred Owls, especially in southern Minnesota, since several owl reports were contributed by inexperienced observers, and Barred Owls are easily and occasionally mistaken for Great Grays.

Another significant, and unfortunate, aspect of this irruption was the large number of Great Grays which were found dead or dying. A minimum of 62 individuals were known to have died, generally as a direct or indirect result of starvation, but undoubtedly many other Great Gray Owls seen alive at one time also died later but were not found. Great Grays typically prey on small mammals, and owls die when populations of these prey are low (which is not known to have been the case last winter) or when they are hard to reach because of deep snow cover (which was definitely the case). If owls do not simply die of starvation, they might tend to hunt more along roadsides or in towns, where small mammals are easier to find, and collide with vehicles or power lines or other obstacles.

Not only were Great Grays confronted by record snowfalls in much of Minnesota which made prey difficult to find, but they were further stressed by severe and sometimes record-breaking cold. Just as serious was the crust which formed on the snow surface later in the winter as a result of alternating freezing and thawing temperatures. Such a crust obviously makes it even more difficult for an owl to reach prey under the snow, and some Great Grays died of injuries after unsuccessful attempts to break through the crust. Indeed, this late-winter crust took a considerable toll on Great Grays, since most dead individuals were found in March or early April.

While 62 dead Great Grays is by far the greatest number of dead owls recorded during any of Minnesota's winter incursions, this number represents 18% of all owls seen, and this proportion is actually lower than in at least one previous Great Gray year. In 1977–78, the mortality was 24%: 14 dead out of 58 total, with all of these the apparent result of collision with vehicles (***The Loon*** 50:63–68). Also note that the mortality in 1968–69 was probably about 19%, about 13 dead out of 68 total, although the exact numbers of owls counted that winter is unclear (***The Loon*** 41:36–39). During the four most recent irruption years before 1995–96, Great Gray mortality was much lower at between 1 and 6%.

Great Gray Owls were also noted elsewhere in higher than normal numbers from Alberta east to the Atlantic coast. According to *National Audubon Society Field Notes*, this species was more common than normal in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Quebec, while in southern Ontario the number of Great Grays was the highest since their record winter of 1978–79. New England recorded 15 individuals, the most there as well since 1978–79. Over 40 individuals were counted in Wisconsin, which I assume represents a record number, and at least one owl made it south to Iowa. Curiously, only a few Great Grays were seen in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, although one in the Lower Peninsula was significant.

III. Northern Hawk Owl

As shown on the accompanying map (Figure 2), there was a total of 47 Northern Hawk Owl individuals reported in

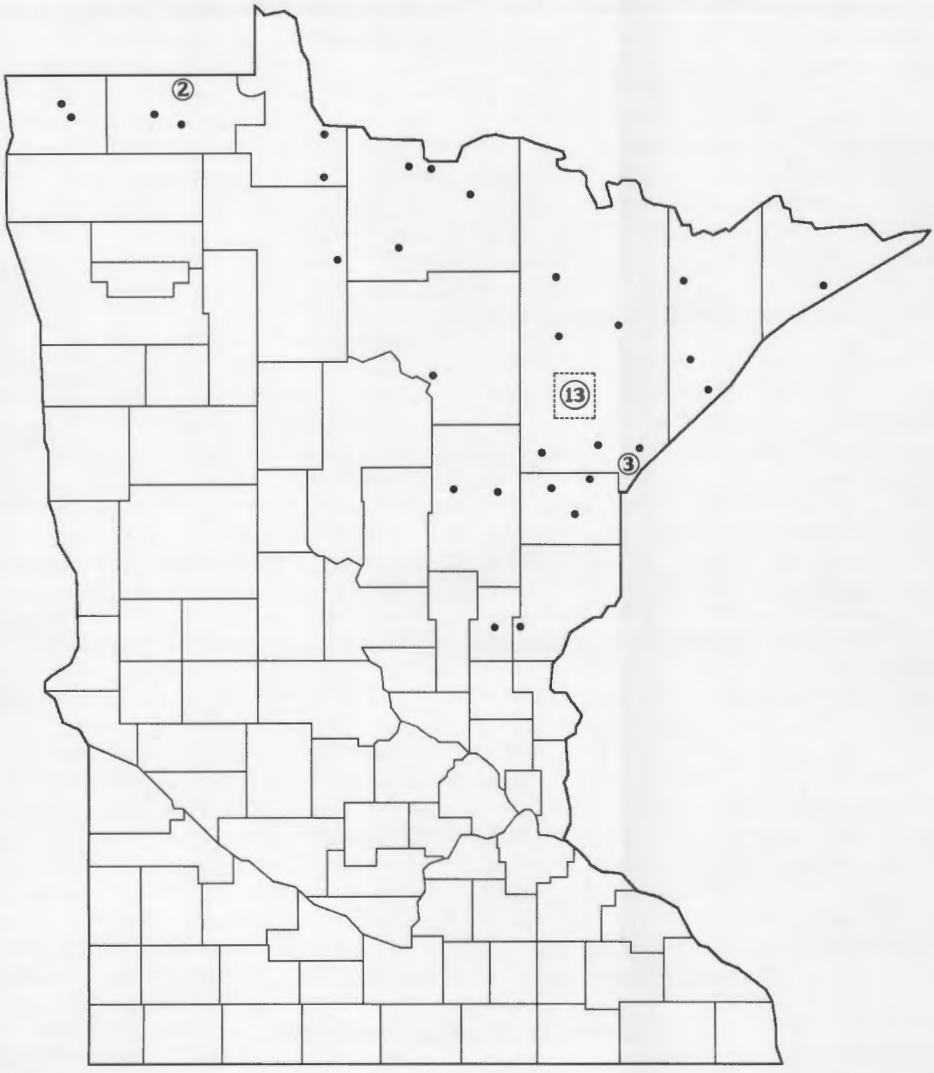

Figure 2. Locations of Northern Hawk Owl records, Winter 1995–96, • = one individual, ⓝ = more than one individual.

Minnesota during the season. The first individual was reported on 31 October near Buhl in St. Louis County, and the last new individual was reported on 25 March along Highway 72 in Lake of the Woods County. There were also at least three hawk owls found earlier in the season which lingered into early April in the Sax-Zim Bog in St. Louis County (with the latest on 7 April) and two others first reported on 23 March along Highway 310 in Roseau County which were last seen on 6 April. The bulk of this influx began in December when 21 individuals were first reported; the number of new owls reported in each of the other four *months* of the season (November, January, February and March) varied between four and

nine individuals.

Except for a few owls seen near the Canadian border in northwestern Minnesota, the distribution of Northern Hawk Owls was basically limited to the northeastern quarter of the state. (There was also an undocumented hawk owl reported in mid-November in Hennepin County in the southern part of the state which is not included in this summary.) As shown on Figure 2, the only concentration of this species was in the Sax-Zim Bog of St. Louis County — indicated by the dashed rectangle on the map — where 13 individuals occurred. On the other hand, relatively few hawk owls were seen in Aitkin County or in the "Big Bog" country of Beltrami and Koochiching counties, where this owl is to be expected in most winters and where many were seen in the record 1991–92 season (***The Loon*** 64:189–195).

Fortunately, unlike the Boreal and Great Gray owls, mortality in this species was low, with only one individual known to have died (of unknown causes; found 1 March in Duluth); another was found injured in Duluth on 12 December (with a broken wing, apparently after hitting a window). Since the diet of Northern Hawk Owls is more varied than Borealss and Great Grays, they are generally less vulnerable to starvation when small mammals are scarce or when the snow is unusually deep or crusted over. Accordingly, invasion winters of this species occur at relatively infrequent intervals.

This season's hawk owl total represents the second or third largest winter invasion of this species on record in Minnesota. As mentioned earlier and documented in ***The Loon*** (64:189–195), the record number was in the 1991–92 season when 159 individuals were counted. That same article also mentions that the total number of hawk owls seen during the invasion winter of 1962–63 is unclear, but it was probably about the same as in 1995–96. (Also note, at the time of this writing in early January, about 40 Northern Hawk Owls have already been reported during the winter of 1996–97.)

Finally, note that this Northern Hawk Owl invasion was mostly and curiously limited to Minnesota last winter. According to accounts in *National Audubon Society Field Notes*, there was a small and localized influx in the Canadian prairie provinces, and three individuals (three more than normal) were reported in Wisconsin. However, no other area had a significant number of hawk owls during the season.

IV. Snowy Owl

From November 1995 to April 1996, a total of 51 individual Snowy Owls was recorded in Minnesota. The first Snowy of the season was found dead on 8 November in the Duluth harbor, while the latest Snowy reported for the first time was a dead individual on 22 April near Grand Marais, Cook County. There were also a few other live Snowys seen earlier in the winter which lingered into March, the last of these on 31 March in Clay County. As with the Northern Hawk Owl, the most Snowys were initially reported during December (21 individuals); six were first discovered in November, 12 in January, nine in February, two in March and one in April.

Unlike the hawk owl, however, relatively few Snowy Owls were found in northeastern Minnesota. As shown in Figure 3, the distribution of this owl predominantly included other parts of the state. Curiously, most of them were seen in northwestern and southeastern Minnesota, and essentially none were reported in a broad north-south band through the central part of the state. By contrast, during the record Snowy Owl invasion winter of 1993–94 (***The Loon*** 66:160–165), this species was distributed more evenly throughout Minnesota with records from no fewer than 71 counties. The highest concentrations that season were in St. Louis (25 individuals), Aitkin (22), Hennepin (19) and Crow Wing (15) counties. And during the winter of 1991–92, which recorded the second best influx of this species (***The Loon*** 64:189–195), all but a handful of Snowys were in the northeast-

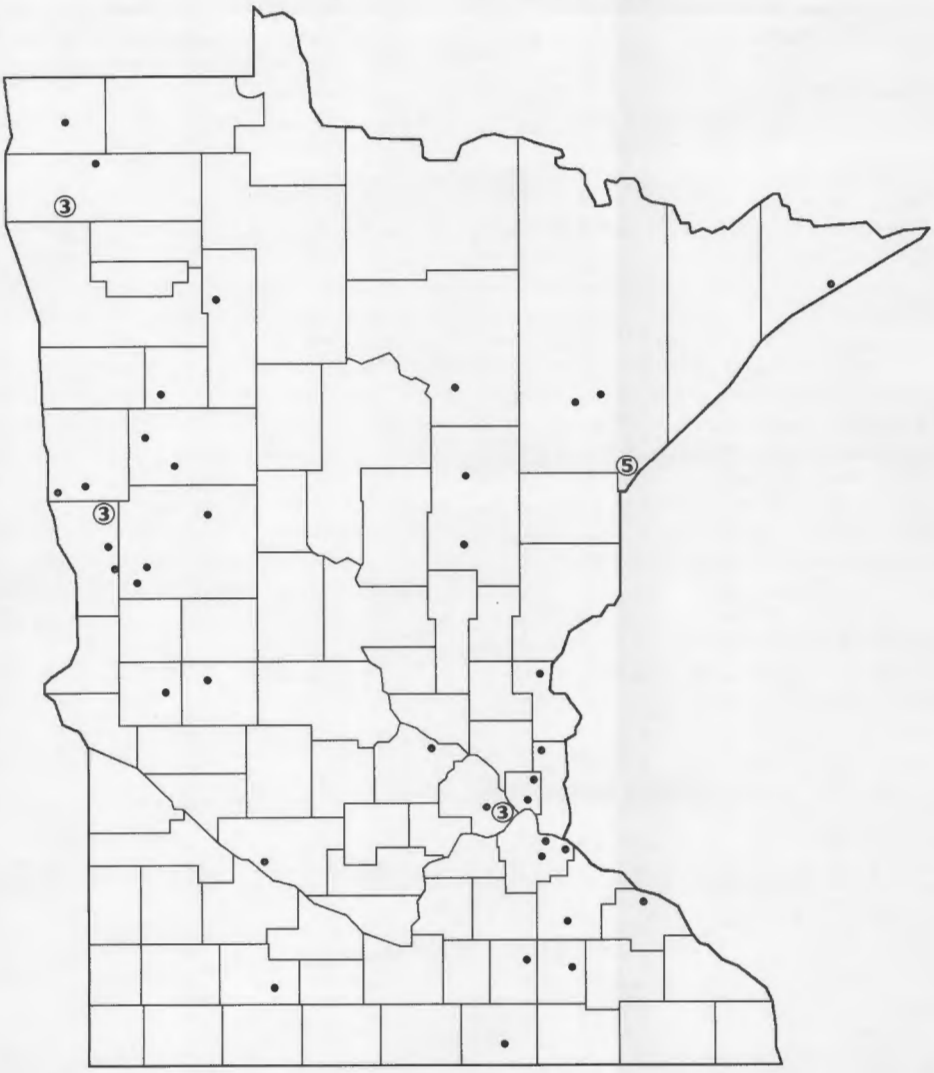

Figure 3. Locations of Snowy Owl records, Winter 1995–96, • = one individual, ⓝ = more than one individual.

ern quarter of the state, especially in St. Louis (42 individuals), Aitkin (18) and Lake (13) counties.

Only three Snowy Owls were found dead. Two of these were previously mentioned: in Duluth on 8 November (hit by a car), and near Grand Marais on 22 April (cause of death unknown); the other was found in early December in Bloomington, Hennepin County (cause of death unknown). Like the Northern Hawk Owl, Snowys have a relatively varied diet and tend to be affected less than Borealis and Great Grays by small mammal numbers and snow conditions. Contrary to popular belief, winter incursions of this owl are irregular and relatively infrequent, at least in Minnesota.

This season's total of 51 individuals apparently represents the fourth highest total on record. As previously published in ***The Loon*** (66:160–165), the largest invasion was in the 1993–94 season when no fewer than 351 individuals turned up. Previous to that, the largest documented invasion was in 1991–92 when 121 Snowys were counted (***The Loon*** 64:189–195). There was also an invasion of this owl in 1926–27, but, although the total number of individuals that winter is unclear, it could be considered at least the third largest invasion of Snowys since 68 dead owls from just the Roseau County area were documented in Roberts' *The Birds of Minnesota* (Volume 1, p. 611).

According to *National Audubon Society Field Notes*, there were a few other areas with more than the usual numbers of Snowy Owls during the season. Wisconsin reported over 30 individuals, numbers were above average in eastern Northern Dakota, and there was a local influx in the vicinity of Calgary, Alberta. But, on the other hand, there were more locations reporting a relative scarcity of Snowys during the winter of 1995–96, including the Maritime provinces of Canada, the northeastern U. S., Michigan, the Chicago area, and in most of the prairie provinces of Canada.

If readers are aware of other records of northern owls from the 1995–96 season which do not seem to be included in this account, the author would appreciate hearing about them so as complete a record as possible exists for this event. I thank the many observers who contributed owl sightings for inclusion in this article; the compilations of records — especially for Great Gray Owls — provided by Tony Hertzel, Warren Nelson, Peder Svingen, Dave Willard and Steve Wilson were especially helpful and appreciated. I also acknowledge the assistance of Tony Hertzel who prepared the finished versions of the maps from my first drafts.

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Irruption of Boreal Owls, Winter 1995–1996

Steve Wilson

A record 212 Boreal Owls were reported in Minnesota from fall of 1995 to spring of 1996. They were seen as far west as Roseau and Becker counties and as far south as Kandiyohi, Hennepin, and Washington counties. Most birds, however, were reported from northeast Minnesota and adjacent Pine, Aitkin, Crow Wing, and Itasca counties (see Figure 1).

Unusually high numbers of Boreal Owls were also reported elsewhere in the Great Lakes region. Wisconsin's 27 reports were a record (*Audubon Field Notes*, 50:284). Michigan reported birds from at least six counties, and Ontario had reports of high numbers from the southern part of the province (*Aud. Field Notes*, 50:165, 173). Above average numbers were also reported in Quebec (*Aud. Field Notes*, 50:252).

Unfortunately, most birds were found dead or dying, apparently from starvation, or as road kills. In Minnesota 176 of the 212 sightings were of dead or dying birds. The other 36 birds were not known to have died. Some of these, however, may have moved to other loca-

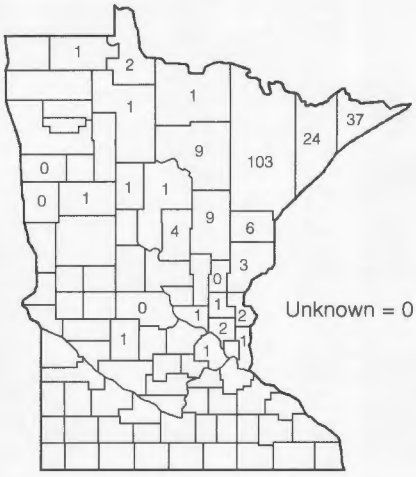

Figure 1. Number of Boreal Owl reports by county, 1995–1996.

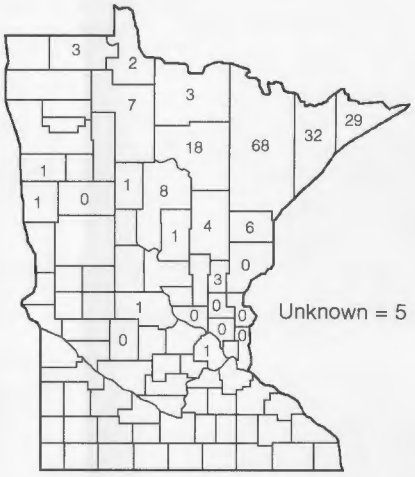

Figure 2. Number of Boreal Owl reports by county, 1988–1989.

tions, died, and been found and included in the mortality total, so the total of 212 may include a few duplicates.

The first report came 16 October, a road-killed bird along the North Shore in Lake County. The next three birds reported were banded at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve in late October and early November (Dave Evans, pers. comm.). Neither occurrence would be too unusual in an average year. It wasn't until December, when 17 Boreal Owls were reported, that the magnitude of this event began to unfold. The first hints of its lethal nature also became evident when ten of the 17 reports turned out to be dead or dying birds. Both total numbers and mortalities of Boreal Owls increased from December through March. January saw 25 reports (20 of those dead/dying), February 61 reports (46 dead/dying), and March 70 reports (65 dead/dying). Reports finally declined in April, to 17, but of these, only one was of a live bird. Dates were unavailable for 18 birds.

Eight wintertime movements of Boreal Owls have been reported in Minnesota. These movements are often called "invasions, influxes, or flights," in part because of a presumption the birds were "invading" from Canada. Surveys over the last ten years by Lane (***The Loon*** 60:99–104) and Wilson (unpublished), however, found a considerable number of birds breeding, or attempting to breed, in Cook, Lake, and St. Louis counties. These "local" birds probably make up an undetermined proportion of winter "invaders." Their appearance in winter could result from a localized movement, combined with a change from nocturnal to diurnal hunting. Thus "irruption" might be a better way to characterize these events.

The first of these irruptions occurred in the winter of 1922–23. Most reports were of birds from Maine to Michigan (Fleming 1930; Bent 1961), but in Minnesota large numbers appeared in at least one county, Roseau (Roberts 1932). Little quantitative information exists for this event, but the published reports suggest this may have been the continent's largest Boreal Owl irruption ever described.

The next irruptions of Boreal Owls in Minnesota are summarized in Table 1. During the first five of these events, sightings were largely confined to the North Shore of Lake Superior, except in 1968–69, when only four of 11 reports were from the North Shore. The rest of the reports that year were from Morrison County in central Minnesota to Freeborn

Irruption Winter	Number of Boreal Owls Reported	Citation
1962–63	9	***The Flicker*** 35:70–71
1965–66	15	***The Loon*** 38:45
1968–69	11	***The Loon*** 41:39
1977–78	66	***The Loon*** 50:63-68
1981–82	39	***The Loon*** 54:176–177
1988–89	194	*unpublished*
1995–96	212	***The Loon*** 68:228–231

Table 1. Boreal Owl sightings statewide.

County on the Iowa border.

The Boreal Owl irruption of 1988–89 was very similar to last winter's event in both size, timing, and lethality, at least in Minnesota. A total of 194 individuals was reported (unpublished, S. Wilson). Of these, 85% (165) were found dead or dying, an almost identical percentage (83%) to last winter's die-off. Dr. Pat Redig and Mark Martell at the Raptor Center confirmed starvation as the cause of death in most cases in 1988–89 by doing an exhaustive series of necropsies on more than 100 birds.

The distribution (see Figure 2) and timing of sightings are also similar for the irruptions of 1988–89 and 1995–96. In 1988 two Boreal Owls were banded at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve, in October and November (Dave Evans, pers. comm.), and an individual was reported at a feeder in Cook County in late November. The pace picked up in December, with 11 reports (five dead/dying), and continued to increase through January (15 birds — ten dead/dying), February (56 birds — 47 dead/dying), and March (61 birds — 56 dead/dying). As in last winter's irruption, reports in 1989 tailed-off in April, to 13, with all but one dead or dying. Thirty-five sightings did not include enough information to assign to a particular month.

A question prompted by the apparent magnitude of the last two irruptions, compared with earlier ones, is whether the difference is due to a greater effort to collect information, or perhaps more thorough coverage by birders in recent years. Perhaps events of this size aren't as notable as they seem, but have just gone undetected, as did breeding Boreal Owls for many years.

A concerted effort was made to collect information, particularly on dead birds, during the irruptions of 1988–89 and 1995–96. Press releases and news stories were used to generate interest, and instruct people to bring dead owls to MN DNR offices. Many dead Boreal Owls were located by calling taxidermists, who were often contacted by finders hoping to have the bird stuffed and put on their mantel (they couldn't; birds can only be kept with state and federal permits for educational purposes). DNR and U.S. Forest Service offices were alerted to the situation, and provided many carcases brought to them, as did a network of dedicated birders. I have no doubt these efforts inflated the total count over what it otherwise would have been. However, aspects of these two events suggest they were still exceptional in nature compared with past Boreal Owl irruptions in Minnesota.

First, many long-time wildlife managers received more reports of Boreal Owls than at any previous time in their careers. This seemed true even if allowances were made for reports caused by the publicity, i.e., many reports were from people unaware of the publicity, prompted to seek answers by their curiosity about an animal they had never before seen. Second, many taxidermists also commented on the unusual nature of this event, and they were generally contacted

by people not motivated by the publicity. Also, my own conversations with many longtime residents in the affected areas suggest these two winters were indeed the worst on record for Boreal Owls.

It's also possible the increased numbers of the last two irruptions are due to northern Minnesota being more densely populated by humans now than during previous irruptions. This could increase the chances of birds being seen or found, particularly since the vast majority of birds reported were found near dwellings. To test this hypothesis, results from an area where the density of human dwellings has been fairly constant for the last seven irruptions, Duluth, were compared. Because Duluth proper has changed relatively little during that time, changes in the number of Boreal Owl reports within the city during irruptions would likely reflect an actual change in abundance of birds, not a change due to reporting differences.

Sightings within the Duluth city limits for the last seven Boreal Owl irruptions, excluding birds banded at Hawk Ridge banding station, which was not operating during all seven events, are presented in Table 2. These numbers suggest that, at least for Duluth, last winter's event easily surpassed all others. The 1988–89 irruption, in turn, surpassed the previous five events, but not as decidedly so for the 1977–78 irruption as the statewide figures suggested (see Table 1). It should be noted that numbers from the 1977–78 event were necessarily more speculative than the last two irruptions, because most reports in 1977–78 were of live birds, making duplicate reports of the same individual more difficult to sort out. Also, the 1977–78 event saw an invasion of 200+ out-of-state birders to the Duluth area (***The Loon*** 50:67), so coverage of that particular area may have been better that year than for the last two irruptions.

Differences in reporting probably account for some of the apparent difference in magnitude between irruptive events. Even after discounting for these reporting differences, though, striking differences remain in numbers of birds and mortality levels between events. These differences probably result from the interplay of a combination of factors, including food (small mammals) abundance, temperature, snow depth and duration, and Boreal Owl population characteristics. The role these factors play will be discussed in a future article.

Irruption Winter	Boreal Owls Reported
1962–63	0
1965–66	7 or fewer
1968–69	2
1977–78	17
1981–82	5
1988–89	24
1995–96	44

Table 2. Total Boreal Owl sightings for Duluth.

I would like to acknowledge the scores of individuals who contributed Boreal Owl reports or carcases last winter and in 1988–89. Their efforts provided the best picture yet of this interesting phenomenon. Special thanks are due Kim Eckert, Bill Lane, Dave Evans, the Raptor Center, and DNR and U.S. Forest Service personnel for compiling multiple records, and Mary Shedd and Kim Eckert for reviewing this manuscript. Anthony Hertzel prepared the maps. The support and encouragement of Tom Nicholls and the USFS North Central Forest Experiment Station, and Ken and Adele Johnson are also greatly appreciated.

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BIRDING BY HINDSIGHT

A Second Look at First State Records (Part Two)

Kim R. Eckert

Or, perhaps this two-part article would more accurately be entitled "Birding by Foresight", since it involves trying to predict what will eventually appear in the state. In any event, just how did the predictions turn out since the earlier installment of this discussion appeared a year ago in ***The Loon*** (67:232–237)? A total of 33 species was included then, species which were thought to have the highest potential of being future additions to the Minnesota list. In case you missed them, 22 of these were simply listed, those which were thought not to present too much of an identification challenge:

Northern Gannet
Brown Pelican
Roseate Spoonbill
Wood Stork
Smew
White-tailed Kite
Spotted Redshank
Wandering Tattler
Heermann's Gull
Royal Tern [Note: this species was mistakenly omitted from the first article]
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 other eleven species or species groups, which involve more in the way of identification difficulties, were then discussed:

Arctic Loon
Anhinga
Tufted Duck
Black Vulture
Pacific Golden-Plover
Mountain Plover
Red-necked (or Rufous) Stint / Little Stint / Temminck's Stint / Long-toed Stint
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
Rock Sandpiper
Western Gull / Slaty-backed Gull
Roseate Tern

But, again, before the identification of the last 11 species is considered, some fair questions to ask are what was added to the Minnesota list since that article, and were they included in the article? At the time of this writing (December 1996), five new species recently were either added or being considered. Two of these, Spotted Towhee and Bullock's Oriole, were added by default: that is, they are birds already recorded in the state, then recently split, and thus added as species to the Minnesota list. Another species, that Rock Ptarmigan in Grand Marais last May, was not on the predicted list, but it probably should have been: after all, there had been at least four previous records from southern Canada, three of these not all that far from Minnesota.

However, at least the other two species were included (sort of) in this two-part article. First, a gull is currently present and under study in Duluth-Superior, and it may prove to be a Slaty-backed by the time this article appears in ***The Loon***. And, second, a controversial Pygmy Nuthatch was seen in Fargo-Moorhead last October, and it was on my list of the eleven species to be discussed below (honest — I didn't just squeeze it on my list after the bird showed up!).

So, here is the rest of the list, bringing the total to 44 species or species groups. All have good potential as future additions to the Minnesota list, and all involve some identification difficulties. Note that the IDs of some of these are beyond the space limitations of this journal, and the reader will then be referred to some other references. Still others are so difficult to confidently identify in the field that it would take photos, tape recordings or even a specimen before the record could be safely admitted to the state list.

Eurasian Collared-Dove. Here we have a species that isn't even illustrated in the North American field guides — Geographic included! So how could this possibly be a bird to look for in Minnesota, and, besides, if not in the field guides how is anyone supposed to identify it? It was only during the 1980s that Florida birders realized this species *(Streptopelia decaocto)* was established in southern Florida — thus, its absence from the field guides, except for a passing reference under Ringed Turtle-Dove *(S. risoria)* in the second edition of the Geographic guide. And since the 1980s, this dove rapidly spread north throughout the rest of Florida and well beyond, with records in recent years from places like South Dakota and Ontario. Many consider it only a matter of time before it reaches the rest of the eastern U. S. and Canada — Minnesota included.

Meanwhile, the Ringed Turtle-Dove has been dropped as a legitimate species from the North American list, even though it can still turn up almost anywhere — Minnesota included — as an escaped cage bird. Therefore, if you encounter a collared/turtle-dove in the field, how do you know whether to dismiss it out of hand as an escape or to jump up and down with excitement because you've just discovered a first state record?

First, disregard two things you'll find in the National Geographic guide. The Ringed Turtle-Dove picture shows contrastingly darker primaries; in reality, the Eurasian Collared-Dove has almost blackish primaries, while the turtle-dove's primaries are actually only a slightly darker shade of buff or light brown. And the text states the collared-dove's black collar is more prominently bordered with white than the turtle-dove's collar; in reality, there is no consistent difference between the two.

Second, be sure to try to find a copy of the excellent article on these two doves which appeared in *American Birds* in 1987: "The Eurasian Collared-Dove Arrives in the Americas" (41:1371–1379). Besides the difference in primaries coloration mentioned above, this article notes especially the Eurasian Collared-Dove's dirty gray under tail coverts, the black on the basal half of the outer webs of the outer tail feathers, its three-syllabled plain cooing song (transcribed as "kuk-kooooooo-kook", accented on the

second syllable), and its loud and harsh single-syllabled call note. By contrast, note the Ringed Turtle-Dove's white under tail coverts, the entire white outer web of the outer rectrices, its more rolling or trilled two-syllabled "kook-krrrroooo" song, and its softer chuckling call notes.

Lesser Nighthawk. Virtually every August, flocks of Common Nighthawks by the hundreds, sometimes thousands, migrate down the North Shore of Lake Superior and through Duluth. And virtually every August I wonder if there might be a stray Lesser Nighthawk among them. After all, there is at least one Ontario record, and I suspect that one could easily wander up this way from Texas — or maybe already has. Of course, the trick would be to detect it since the two nighthawks are so similar, and this is one of those species that would probably require a specimen or a series of high-speed photos to accurately determine its diagnostic field marks on the wings.

As the field guides accurately show, the Lesser's white wing patch is closer to the tip of the wing than on a Common Nighthawk, but this is difficult to clearly see in the field — thus the need for a series of photos, if not a specimen. I've always felt that the rounder wing tip of the Lesser is easier to pick out; this shape results from its outermost primary being shorter than the one next to it. The Common Nighthawk's wing tip appears more pointed since its outermost primary is the longest. Beware, however, of birds in molt whose primaries may not be fully grown, and note that some Commons may have its outer two primaries which appear to be of the same length.

A tape recording of any vocalizations you hear would also be important, and fortunately the calls of the two nighthawks is quite different. The Common's harsh "peent" in flight is easily recognized and should be familiar to Minnesota birders. The Lesser is usually silent in flight, but it can give two types of calls at rest: a prolonged, high-pitched trill on one pitch, very similar to (but longer than) an Eastern Screech-Owl's trill; it also gives a shorter, soft, chuckling series of notes — that doesn't really sound like anything else.

Black-chinned/Broad-tailed/Allen's Hummingbirds. As demonstrated by Minnesota's record of a Calliope Hummingbird and its three Magnificent Hummingbirds, it would seem almost any hummingbird from the west or southwest could eventually turn up here or elsewhere in the Great Lakes region: witness the recent Broad-billed Hummingbird and Green Violet-ear records in Michigan! The heading to this paragraph lists three possible first state records (but others must be considered as well), and, unless the individual involved were an adult male, the identification would present a challenge.

Female/immature hummingbird ID is beyond the scope of this article: to tell a Black-chinned from a Ruby-throated or an Allen's from a Rufous in the field borders on the impossible, and a potential Broad-tailed wouldn't be much easier. As with the nighthawks, therefore, a specimen, netted bird in the hand or a series of photographs might be required to identify such a hummingbird. I would also recommend that you consult the hummingbird chapter in Kaufman's *Advanced Birding* guide; it doesn't provide all the answers, but it provides an excellent basis as to how to go about examining any suspicious hummingbird you see. And my only other advice is to consider any hummingbird suspicious and worth careful examination if it's in October or even later.

Red-naped Sapsucker. The *Advanced Birding* guide would also be a good reference to consult if you find something that looks like it might be Minnesota's first Red-naped Sapsucker. The potential for this species to appear here or farther east might have to be considered low, however, since Louisiana appears to be the only eastern state with a record of it. On the other hand, birders have not had to tell one from a Yellow-bellied for very long, since it wasn't until the mid-1980s

when the two were split. And it was even more recently that we found out the identification wasn't quite as straightforward as it seemed.

The problem is that the occasional Yellow-bellied Sapsucker can actually have a red spot on its nape, which could obviously and easily lead to a misidentification. It is necessary, therefore, to consider something other than nape color, and what is most useful is the black line which frames the throat. A complete, unbroken line indicates it's probably just another Yellow-bellied, since on a Red-naped this frame is usually broken. On a female Red-naped (which has a red and white throat, unlike the entirely white-throated female Yellow-bellied) the black frame is usually broken up by paler feathers on the sides of the neck; on a male Red-naped (completely red throat) the black frame is interrupted and invaded by the red on the throat.

There are also some minor differences in the thicknesses of the white head stripes (narrower on the Red-naped) and in how much black appears on the backs (more on the Red-naped). A set of clear photographs would be useful, perhaps essential, to substantiate any Minnesota record of a Red-naped Sapsucker. In addition, besides the sapsucker chapter in Kaufman's guide, it would also be useful to consult two sets of articles on this subject: in *American Birds* 42:348–350, and in *Birding* 23:20–26.

Hammond's/Dusky/Gray/Pacific-slope/Cordilleran Flycatchers. The identification of Empidonax flycatchers is difficult enough when it just involves the five Eastern species that belong in Minnesota. And when you add in the possibility of five Western species occurring here as well (I think the Buff-breasted can be safely disregarded), you definitely are dealing with an ID subject well beyond the space limitations of this article. As far as I am aware, all five Western Empids have occurred or have been suspected east of the Mississippi, and probably all five have been overlooked at one time or another because of their close similarity to the Eastern ones.

Of course, the place to start when dealing with a possible vagrant (which would probably be in fall), is to consult the Empidonax chapter in Advanced Birding, which I consider to be the most useful one in the whole book. And if you want to go even more into depth, consult the five-part series on Empidonax flycatchers which appeared in *Birding* in the mid-1980s: 17:151–158, 17:277–287, 18:153–159, 18:315–327, and 19(5)7–15.

If a suspected vagrant is calling, of course, pay particular attention to what you are hearing, and tape record it if possible for future analysis. Try especially to see the shape of the bill and how much if any darkness appears on the tip of the lower mandible — these features are more useful on Western Empids than on Eastern ones. Consider whether the primary extension (i.e., how far the tip of the longest primary extends beyond the tertials) is short or long. Also pay attention to the boldness and shape of the eye ring. Trying to successfully document a vagrant Empid (especially a silent one) would, of course, be difficult even if a series of photographs were taken — it might have to mist-netted and measured before its identity could be proven.

Cassin's/Tropical Kingbirds. It has always been considered a safe assumption that any yellow kingbird seen in Minnesota is automatically a Western. While this assumption makes sense, it may not necessarily always be valid, since the Cassin's Kingbird is apparently regular in western South Dakota, and it has wandered east at least to Ontario and Wisconsin. Even the possibility of a Tropical Kingbird in Minnesota might also have to be considered, since it annually wanders up to the Pacific Northwest and has been recorded along the Atlantic Coast.

A second look at yellow kingbirds might therefore be a good idea, especially if you see one that appears to be lacking the narrow white edges of the tail which are diagnostic of Westerns. (Keep

in mind, however, these edges are often difficult to see, and they may be missing if the outer rectrices are worn or if the bird is in molt.) It may well prove to be a Cassin's if it has a darker gray chest which sets off a contrasting and cleanly delineated area of white on the throat and malar area. And if it appears to have an especially large bill, a more extensive area of white on the throat, a breast which looks more yellow than grayish, and a tail which is visibly notched, then you may be looking at a Tropical Kingbird.

Of course, the vocalizations of these three kingbirds differ, but, except for the Tropical's soft and thin twittering on one pitch, they are varied and difficult to clearly put into words. Listening to tapes is therefore recommended, as would be becoming thoroughly familiar with the Western's calls so that the listener is ready if a Cassin's starts calling. I also refer the reader to the article "Western Kingbird Identification" in *American Birds* (46:323–326).

Carolina Chickadee. In Minnesota?! At first it does seem unlikely for this southern chickadee to have the potential for occurring here, but there are apparently valid records from Iowa, Michigan and Ontario. Presumably, these were either specimens or mist-netted birds measured in the hand — which would probably also have to be the case if one were admitted to the Minnesota list. The differences between Carolina and Black-capped Chickadees are quite subtle and overlapping to some extent, and hybridization does occur.

This is another identification problem addressed by Kaufman's *Advanced Birding* guide, which stresses the Black-capped's whiter greater wing coverts and a more ragged lower edge on the bib, as opposed to the Carolina's grayer greater coverts and more cleat-cut edge to the bib. It is also important to carefully take note of — or preferably tape record — any vocalizations you hear. The "chick-a-dee-dee" call notes of the two chickadees may not consistently differ, but their typical songs do. Unfortunately, atypical songs are sometimes given, and a hybrid chickadee might sing either species' song.

Pygmy Nuthatch. This may no longer be just a potential first state record since one flew across the Red River into Moorhead last October, but it was on my list of species to be discussed in this article before that happened (honest!), so I may as well continue with a comment or two. This species was certainly not unexpected here since it had been seen in Iowa and in Sioux Falls, S. D., not far from the Minnesota line. While the circumstances of that nuthatch being seen in Moorhead remain controversial, there was fortunately no controversy regarding its identification. But the ID was not as straightforward as one might think since the possibility of Brown-headed Nuthatch had to be precluded (it seems this southeastern U. S. nuthatch is on the Wisconsin list, although I'd be curious to see how it was identified).

Attention had to be paid to the exact color of the cap, which was grayish brown, almost more gray than brown. By contrast, the Brown-headed's brown cap is paler, almost tan, and lacks any grayish tones. Just as useful were its call notes that were fortunately captured on tape for the record: single sharp notes reminiscent of a Red Crossbill or House Finch. The Brown-headed Nuthatch's calls are more chattering and squeakier — they typically resemble the squeaking of a "rubber ducky" toy.

Cassin's Sparrow. Sure enough, there it is in the *Advanced Birding* guide: a chapter on the Cassin's Sparrow. No need for this paragraph to continue any farther, one might then assume. Unfortunately, that chapter is devoted to how to tell a Cassin's from a Botteri's Sparrow, while what is needed here is how to separate one from the other Minnesota sparrows. And you wouldn't be wasting your time looking for one in the state, since it is apparently rare-regular in southwestern South Dakota, there are a few Ontario records, and it is truly over-

due in Minnesota.

A singing male Cassin's would be a cinch, since it has a quite distinctive and musical song — probably the prettiest song of any U. S. sparrow. A silent Cassin's in fresh plumage in fall should also be possible to recognize. Though a nondescript, grayish sparrow with unstreaked underparts (which alone, come to think of it, are features not matched by any Minnesota sparrow), it does show a distinct eye ring, and in flight it shows a relatively long and fanned tail with distinctive white corners. A Cassin's in worn plumage in spring or summer, however, would be more of a challenge, since they often lack the white eye ring and corners on the tail.

Of course, complete written field notes or, preferably, some clear photos would be needed to document Minnesota's first Cassin's Sparrow. So have that note pad and camera ready if you encounter a truly nondescript, grayish sparrow with unstreaked underparts. While some birders would consider most sparrows nondescript, none of them are as quite as dull as a Cassin's (except, perhaps, a Grasshopper Sparrow in worn plumage) — and this grayish dullness alone might tip you off that you're looking at a first state record.

Shiny Cowbird. "In Minnesota?!", you might have exclaimed earlier when noting the presence of Eurasian Collared-Dove and Carolina Chickadee on this list. Exclaim away again, if you'd like, especially when you consider this species is not included in the standard field guides. Like the collared-dove, the Shiny Cowbird *(Molothrus bonariensis)* did not become established in Florida until the 1980s, too late for the field guides, but since then its numbers and range have increased in Florida, and vagrants have wandered north as far as Maine and Tennessee.

So don't be too surprised some year if you see a uniformly iridescent black bird in the state about the same size and shape of a Brown-headed Cowbird. Such a male Shiny Cowbird might suggest a male Brewer's Blackbird except for its dark eyes, shorter bill and shorter tail. A female or juvenile Shiny Cowbird would definitely be a lot trickier, since the only consistent difference would be its slightly longer and thinner bill when compared to a female Brown-headed. But this difference is subtle and would only be noticeable if there were female Brown-headeds present for direct comparison. Here, obviously, is another identification where a specimen, a mist-netted bird in the hand or some good photographs would probably be required to add it to the Minnesota list. For further information, there are two brief articles on this species: in *American Birds* (41:370–371) and in *Birding* (23:233–234).

Lesser Goldfinch. With records in Ontario and both Dakotas, here we have the last species with obvious potential for eventually appearing on the Minnesota list. A male Lesser Goldfinch, whether an individual of the black-backed or green-backed form, would be relatively easy to separate from an American Goldfinch in any plumage. But if a female or juvenile goldfinch, more careful attention would need to be paid to three features.

First, the under tail coverts of a Lesser are yellow, while those of an American are usually white; note, however, some Americans might appear slightly tinged with yellow under the tail. Second, the Lesser's wing bars are narrower than the American's, and at rest it usually shows a small square of white on the folded primaries, which is not found on the American. And try to note the pattern on the underside of the tail: on a female/juvenile Lesser, the tail is either entirely dark or at most it has small white patches restricted to the center of the tail; an American's tail shows a larger white area that extends to the tail tip.

There is also a good article on this subject in *American Birds* worth consulting: "Notes on Goldfinch Identification" (47:159–162).

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Bald Eagle Attacks Osprey Nestlings

Tom M. Liston

On 14 and 15 August 1996 at Minister Lake, north of Ely, St. Louis County, I observed a Bald Eagle attacking pre-fledged Osprey chicks. The Osprey nest in question is on one of several artificial platforms that I and an associate have placed in the area since 1989. Four of the seven have produced Osprey young over the past few years.

The Minister Lake nest is located at the southwest corner of the 70-acre lake, which drains into the east arm of Burntside Lake. The platform is 35 feet above ground in a topped white pine and was erected in 1989. It has been occupied every year except 1992 by what I think is the same male Osprey and, over the years, two different females. Five young have fledged, two each in 1994 and 1995, one in 1996.

My property on Minister Lake includes a cabin, from which I can observe the Osprey nest. When I arrived on 12 August 1996, two large chicks were in the nest, exercising their wings and apparently only days from fledging. The adult male Osprey, in regular attendance earlier in the summer, was seen in the area only once in the period from 12 to 17 August. The female seemed to be the sole provider of food and was frequently away from the nest, presumably on fishing trips. Judging by size, one chick was a male, the larger one a female.

At 6:00 A.M. on 14 August, the adult female Osprey delivered a fish to the nest and left the area. The sky was overcast and the temperature in the low 50s. At 6:30, I saw an adult Bald Eagle about 30 feet above the water, 60 yards away. Though attempting to stay airborne, the eagle was descending at an angle of about 30 degrees from the vicinity of the Osprey nest toward the lake. I could see that it was clutching something large in its talons as it hit the water. I immediately assumed that the object was an Osprey.

After hitting the water, the eagle released its prey and flew off to the north, disappearing from view behind the trees. With my binoculars I could see a young Osprey floundering on the surface of the lake. I checked the nest and could see the head of only one chick above its rim.

In a canoe, I approached the Osprey and could see that it was the male chick. Its eyes were open and it tried to flap its wings, but offered no resistance when I lifted it from the water. Back at the cabin, I estimated its weight at 2.5 to 3 lbs. There were at least two puncture wounds on either side of its back, both bleeding slightly. When placed on a rock, it initially stood erect, but soon its legs collapsed and it lay on its stomach, seemingly in shock. The adult female was in the area only twice through the remainder of the day. She showed no interest in the grounded chick, which died in the afternoon.

I do not know whether the eagle had landed on the nest or had grabbed the young Osprey on the fly, because my first observation came a few seconds after the assault.

The following day, 15 August, at 6:40 A.M., I was on my dock when I heard a loud splash. I turned to the sound just in time to see a Bald Eagle lifting from the surface 30 yards away, and I watched as it flew north to a perch on a dead tree on the other side of the lake. Behind it in the water was the second Osprey chick.

The young bird was swimming by flopping its wings and moving towards a dead branch which angled down from the shoreline into the lake. I could see that the eagle was watching the Osprey from its distant vantage point. Then suddenly, the eagle flew toward Burntside

Lake to the south, disappearing from view beyond the trees.

The young female Osprey did not appear to be injured. Within minutes, she was alternately flapping her wings and preening. I watched for the adult female Osprey, which again had been absent during the attack. I saw her only once later in the day, when she returned with a fish to the nest. She spent several minutes scanning the area and I am confident that she was aware of her offspring below her. The chick, too, continually looked up at the nest while the adult was present, but did not vocalize. After ten minutes, the adult Osprey flew to a nearby snag and ate the fish. She then disappeared for the rest of the day.

Next morning, I caught three small pike and placed them, cut open, about a foot from the young Osprey, still on the snag along the shoreline. I decided that if she refused the food being offered, I would transport her to the Raptor Center in St. Paul the following day.

At about 10:30 A.M., I was returning to my cabin in a canoe when the adult female Osprey came flying over the lake, calling what I have come to recognize as her "coaxing" call. The young Osprey was gone from its snag. I quickly searched the shoreline, fearful that the eagle had returned and finished its business. Nothing. Raising my glasses to the nest, I saw the young Osprey perched on the rim, wing-flapping and calling to its mother. It had flown from the ground to the nest!

Again, I had not seen the actual attack, but because the young Osprey exhibited no sign of injury, I suspect it had seen the eagle's approach and left the nest on its own ahead of its pursuer. Both birds then went down into the water, the eagle flying off when it missed its prey.

This episode prompts several questions, the most central being the reason for the eagle's aggressive behavior. Was the larger bird on a food foray? Or was it trying to eliminate territorial competition? I suspect the latter, but the question remains unanswered. A second question is the absence of defense of the chicks by their parents. The Osprey chicks in question were about ten days behind the normal fledging schedule for this area. Perhaps the absent male was delivering food to the female at some distant location. Or perhaps his internal timetable had triggered post-nesting behavior in which the urge to provide food had subsided. This could explain the female's absences, if she had become the sole provider. Curiously, these adult Ospreys rarely fish in the immediate area of Minister Lake, but almost always fly to more distant bodies of water. It is not unusual for adult Ospreys to distance themselves from the nest as fledging approaches, but I have never before known them to withdraw to a distance that would leave the nest vulnerable to predators.

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The 1996 M.O.U. 300 Club and 200 County Club

Anthony and Ann Hertzel

With this year's split of Rufous-sided Towhee into Eastern Towhee and Spotted Towhee, many 300 Club members were able to add a bird to their list without stepping outdoors. An additional split of Northern Oriole into Baltimore Oriole and Bullock's Oriole added still another bird to several

lists. Both splits were enacted by the American Ornithologists' Union in 1996.

For the rest of us who had to get out and go birding, there were some notable records this year. These include the Pacific Loon in Minneapolis in July, the Pomarine Jaeger in Lake City in November, and the Prairie Warblers in Anoka County last June. The six Sabine's Gulls probably lengthened a few lists as well.

Several members of the 300 Club have passed away, but their names are still familiar to many M.O.U. members. Their membership should be remembered on occasion:

371 Terry Savaloja
339 Doug Campbell
322 Joanne Dempsey
315 Wally Jiracek
314 Betty Campbell
310 Brother Theodore Volker
303 Violet Lender

Here are the M.O.U. 300 Club and 200 County Club lists for 1996.

8461 Pleasant View Drive, Mounds View MN, 55112.

The 1996 M.O.U. 300 Club

395	Raymond Glassel	357		323	Helen Tucker
394		356		322	David Benson
393	Robert B. Janssen	355	Mike Mulligan	–	David Cahlander
392		354		321	Charles Krulas
391		353	Dennis Martin	320	
390		–	Dave Sovereign	319	
389	Kim Eckert	352		318	Connie Osbeck
388		351		317	William Bronn
387		350	Bob Ekblad	–	Kathy Heidel
386		349	Barbara Martin	–	Joan Johnson
385	Dick Ruhme	–	Jim Williams	316	Jude Hughes-Williams
384		348	Anne Marie Plunkett	–	David Thurston
383		–	Dick Sandve	315	Forest Strnad
382		347		314	
381		346	Elaine McKenzie	313	Al Batt
380		345		–	Ed Jacobs
379	Don Bolduc	344		–	Amy Proffit
–	Bill Litkey	343		312	Ron Silverman
378	Jo Blanich	342	Jerry Bonkoski	–	Nestor Hiemenz
377		341		311	Joan Fowler
376		340		–	Gary Simonson
375		339	Steve Ekblad	310	James Eikenberry
374		338	Bruce Baer	–	John Hockema
373		337	Alice Hennessey	–	Kirk Jeffrey
372		–	Doug Johnson	309	Edwin Lins
371		–	William Marengo	308	Jeff Stephenson
370		336		307	Craig Blowers
369		335		–	Mark Citsay
368	Warren Nelson	334	Ruth Andberg	–	Louis Dinzl
367	Karol Gresser	333	Peter Neubeck	306	Tom Bell
366	Al Bolduc	–	Jerry Pruett	–	Scott Mehus
–	Anthony Hertzel	–	Tom Tustison	305	Rick Hoyme
365	Liz Campbell	332	J.S. Futcher	–	Jack Telfer
–	Ann McKenzie	–	Bill George	–	Pat Telfer
–	Jon Peterson	–	Don Wanschura	304	Scott Foster
364		331		–	Burnett Hojnacki
363	Steve Millard	330	Phyllis Basford	–	Ken Oulman
–	Peder Svingen	–	Jay Hamernick	303	Ronald Selbitschka
362		329	Dick Rengstorf	–	Tom Soulen
361	Oscar Johnson	328		302	
360	Jerry Gresser	327	Byron Bratlie	301	
–	Bill Pieper	326	Howard Towle	300	Edith Grace Quam
359	Harding Huber	325	Ken LaFond	–	Michael Steffes
358		324			

Numbers as of 12/1/96

The 1996 M.O.U. 200 County Club

Aitkin 297
273 Warren Nelson
269 Jo Blanich
248 Raymond Glassel
238 Robert B. Janssen
229 Ken LaFond
215 Cindy Butler

Anoka 309
291 Ken LaFond
266 Craig Blowers
263 Raymond Glassel
253 Steve Carlson
247 Karl Bardon
243 Robert B. Janssen
234 Ruth Andberg
230 Dick Rengstorf

Becker 280
247 Betsy Beneke
230 Raymond Glassel
223 Robert B. Janssen
209 Ken LaFond

Beltrami 276
236 Jeffrey Palmer
234 Doug Johnson
227 Raymond Glassel
225 Ken LaFond
214 Al Bolduc
213 Robert B. Janssen

Benton 248
225 Ken LaFond
220 Raymond Glassel
217 Robert B. Janssen

Big Stone 269
229 Raymond Glassel
220 Robert B. Janssen
203 Ken LaFond

Blue Earth 276
232 Raymond Glassel
216 Robert B. Janssen
205 John Frentz
202 Ken LaFond

Brown 264
238 Raymond Glassel
222 Robert B. Janssen
201 Ken LaFond

Carlton 255
233 Ken LaFond
214 Raymond Glassel
210 Robert B. Janssen

Carver 276
254 Kathy Heidel
248 Raymond Glassel
248 Dennis Martin
233 Robert B. Janssen
231 Mike Mulligan
210 William Marengo
209 Jim Williams
204 Ken LaFond
200 Al Bolduc

Cass 273
222 Raymond Glassel
212 Ken LaFond
211 Robert B. Janssen

Chippewa 255
222 Raymond Glassel
216 Robert B. Janssen
211 Al Bolduc
207 Ken LaFond

Chisago 268
248 Raymond Glassel
228 Ken LaFond
229 Robert B. Janssen
215 Dick Rengstorf

Clay 301
234 Raymond Glassel
222 Robert O'Connor
222 Robert B. Janssen
215 Ken LaFond
205 Betsy Beneke

Clearwater 272
250 Al Bolduc
223 Raymond Glassel
217 Ken LaFond
212 Robert B. Janssen

Cook 305
247 Kim Eckert
230 Robert B. Janssen
229 Raymond Glassel
227 Craig Blowers
226 Peder Svingen
224 Walter Popp
214 Helen Tucker
207 Ken LaFond
205 Jim Williams

Cottonwood 272
230 Raymond Glassel
221 Robert B. Janssen
214 Jerry Bonkoski
203 Ken LaFond

Crow Wing 279
251 Jo Blanich
232 Warren Nelson
230 Raymond Glassel
227 Ken LaFond
223 Robert B. Janssen

Dakota 306
283 Raymond Glassel
271 Tom Tustison
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221 Ann McKenzie
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Dodge 250
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201 Bob Ekblad
200 Ken LaFond

Douglas 247
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Faribault 250
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216 Robert B. Janssen
201 Ken LaFond

Fillmore 262
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212 John Hockema
209 Robert B. Janssen
205 Ken LaFond

Freeborn 268
264 Al Batt
252 Scott Mehus
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202 Ken LaFond
202 Anne Marie Plunkett

Goodhue 297
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266 Bill Litkey
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231 Anne Marie Plunkett
219 Al Bolduc
208 Karl Bardon
200 Ken LaFond

Grant 264
226 Raymond Glassel
220 Robert B. Janssen
208 Steve Millard
202 Ken LaFond

Hennepin 340
313 Oscar Johnson
309 Raymond Glassel
308 Steve Carlson
308 Robert B. Janssen
290 Al Bolduc
271 Craig Blowers
266 David Thurston
264 Tom Tustison
260 Karol Gresser
250 Dick Ruhme
247 Karl Bardon
246 Dennis Martin
245 Dick Rengstorf
243 Kathy Heidel
242 Warren Woessner
241 Bill Litkey
234 James Eikenberry
233 Ed Jacobs
233 Amy Proffit
233 Tom Soulen
231 William Marengo
230 Ken LaFond
228 Jim Williams
227 Gary Simonson
227 Peder Svingen
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209 Louis Dinzl
213 Don Wanschura
203 Elaine McKenzie
202 Jack Telfer
202 Pat Telfer

Houston 269
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208 Ann McKenzie

Hubbard 264
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Isanti 258
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228 Raymond Glassel
212 Robert B. Janssen

Itasca 258
211 Ken LaFond
210 Raymond Glassel
209 Al Bolduc
204 Robert B. Janssen

Jackson 274
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224 Robert B. Janssen
200 Ken LaFond

Kanabec 244
227 Ken LaFond
227 Raymond Glassel
209 Robert B. Janssen
209 Craig Menze
207 Craig Blowers

Kandiyohi 271
236 Ronald Erpelding
233 Raymond Glassel
221 Robert B. Janssen
212 Ken LaFond

Kittson 267
221 Raymond Glassel
220 Karl Bardon
213 Ken LaFond
211 Robert B. Janssen
202 Peder Svingen

Koochiching 244
229 Ken LaFond
208 Raymond Glassel
202 Robert B. Janssen

Lac Qui Parle 304
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Lake 284
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222 Mary Shedd
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211 Robert B. Janssen

Lake of the Woods 266
223 Peder Svingen
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205 Ken LaFond

Le Sueur 268
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227 Robert B. Janssen
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210 Peder Svingen
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Lincoln 251
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Lyon 282
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Mahnomen 251
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McLeod 260
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Meeker 252
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218 Robert B. Janssen
214 Ken LaFond

Mille Lacs 272
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221 Robert B. Janssen

Morrison 267
231 Raymond Glassel
226 Ken LaFond
219 Loiel Ryan
219 Robert B. Janssen

Mower 272
232 Dick Smaby
224 Raymond Glassel
221 Robert Jessen
217 Anne Marie Plunkett
214 Robert B. Janssen
204 Al Batt
201 Ken LaFond

Murray 262
231 Nelvina De Kam
223 Raymond Glassel
212 Robert B. Janssen
202 Ken LaFond

Nicollet 273
247 Raymond Glassel
237 John Frentz
235 Robert B. Janssen
206 Ken LaFond

Nobles 248
220 Raymond Glassel
214 Robert B. Janssen
207 Nelvina De Kam
201 Ken LaFond

Norman 251
217 Raymond Glassel
214 Robert B. Janssen
204 Ken LaFond

Olmsted 292
283 Anne Marie Plunkett
274 Jerry Bonkoski
274 Bob Ekblad
263 Jerry Pruett
260 Joan Fowler
257 Steve Ekblad
252 Charles Krulas
243 Jeff Stephenson
239 Raymond Glassel
239 Ron Silverman
237 Jesse Wallace
227 Vince Herring
225 Robert B. Janssen
224 Diane Anderson
224 Helen Tucker
206 Jon Peterson
205 Ken LaFond
203 Ann McKenzie

Otter Tail 305
276 Steve Millard
231 Raymond Glassel
226 Robert B. Janssen
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Pennington 263
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Pine 267
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205 Betsy Beneke

Pipestone 264
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Polk 283
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233 Robert B. Janssen
233 Peder Svingen
232 Raymond Glassel
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213 Ken LaFond

Pope 252
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202 Ken LaFond

Ramsey 300
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254 Robert B. Janssen
244 Tom Soulen
233 Dick Rengstorf
232 David Thurston
231 Ken LaFond
231 Elaine McKenzie
227 Robert Holtz
211 Al Bolduc
207 Frank Berdan
206 Ann McKenzie

Red Lake 235
214 Raymond Glassel
212 Robert B. Janssen
202 Ken LaFond

Redwood 249
230 Raymond Glassel
226 Robert B. Janssen
201 Ken LaFond

Renville 257
236 Raymond Glassel
225 Robert B. Janssen
210 Ken LaFond

Rice 289
263 Orwin Rustad
262 Tom Boevers
258 Forest Strnad
257 Raymond Glassel
230 Robert B. Janssen
212 Anne Marie Plunkett
205 Ken LaFond
201 Jacob Langeslag

Rock 263
244 Kim Eckert
223 Raymond Glassel
215 Nelvina De Kam
212 Robert B. Janssen
202 Ken LaFond

Roseau 294
265 Peder Svingen
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224 Robert B. Janssen
212 Ken LaFond

Saint Louis 356
319 Kim Eckert
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278 Doug Johnson
278 Peder Svingen
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258 Terry Wiens
255 Ken LaFond
249 Dennis Martin
247 Dick Ruhme
243 William Marengo
241 Al Bolduc
237 Steven Schon
225 Dick Sandve
224 Jim Williams
224 Bob Ekblad
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221 Steve Wilson
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217 Scott Mehus
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214 Karl Bardon
212 Jon Peterson
209 Oscar Johnson
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201 Jerry Bonkoski

Scott 277
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Sibley 253
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Steele 259
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200 Ken LaFond

Stevens 253
224 Raymond Glassel
215 Robert B. Janssen
202 Ken LaFond

Swift 259
229 Raymond Glassel
220 Robert B. Janssen
202 Ken LaFond

Todd 262
243 Ken LaFond
226 Raymond Glassel
214 Robert B. Janssen
214 John Kroll

Traverse 253
228 Raymond Glassel
217 Robert B. Janssen
202 Ken LaFond

Wabasha 282
252 Raymond Glassel
243 Don Mahle
239 Helen Tucker
236 Robert B. Janssen
228 Anne Marie Plunkett
226 Bill Litkey
213 Ken LaFond
203 Al Bolduc

Wadena 258
216 Raymond Glassel
209 Ken LaFond
207 Robert B. Janssen

Waseca 250
236 Raymond Glassel
217 Al Batt
216 Robert B. Janssen
200 Ken LaFond

Washington 303
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270 Bill Litkey
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253 Dave Sovereign
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231 Tom Bell
230 Ken LaFond

Watonwan 244
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222 Robert B. Janssen
203 Ken LaFond

Wilkin 265
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220 Robert B. Janssen
215 Steve Millard
203 Ken LaFond
202 Karl Bardon

Winona 292
252 Raymond Glassel
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228 Robert B. Janssen
226 Scott Mehus
202 Ken LaFond

Wright 271
251 Raymond Glassel
234 Robert B. Janssen
226 Ken LaFond
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Yellow Medicine 267
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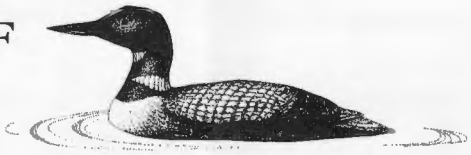
221 Robert B. Janssen
203 Ken LaFond

Numbers as of 12/1/96

NOTES OF INTEREST

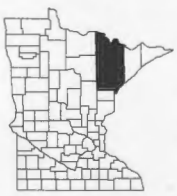


POSSIBLE WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL NESTING — On 14 April 1996, Jared Anez and I were birding Lincoln County as part of the Adopt-a-County program. We stopped at the cemetery on the east edge of Lake Benton on Highway 14 and looked over the large pine trees in the cemetery. While vocalizing, I attracted two finches to lower branches approximately 15 feet from view. One was a streaked brown and yellow bird, the other a solid orangish color. I called Jared into view, since I could not see the lower parts of the birds from my angle. Jared observed white wing bars on the yellowish bird, but did not see the orangish colored bird before they both flew. After discussion and consulting Peterson, National Geographic, and Minnesota bird guides, we decided they were White-winged Crossbills. An attempt to relocate the birds was successful, and a total of seven adult White-winged Crossbills were observed for 20–30 minutes. Lighting conditions were exceptional — cloudy skies with good lighting. Both Jared and I used 10X binoculars. We concluded all birds were adults, three male and three female, with the orangish colored bird probably a subadult male. I returned to the Lake Benton cemetery on 28 April to look for the crossbills again. Skies were again overcast and the temperature was moderate. It was raining slightly. Despite searching for 15–20 minutes, I only spotted one White-winged Crossbill, an adult male. While birding

Juvenile White-winged Crossbill, 7 May 1996, Lake Benton, Lincoln County. Photo by Roger Shcroeder.

Lincoln County on 5 May, Jared and I again returned to the cemetery to look for the crossbills. To our surprise, we immediately found one adult male in the company of what appeared to be three juveniles. They were heavily streaked brown birds with a slight yellowish cast. The crossed bills were evident, as were white wing markings. The male was extremely tolerant of us and allowed us to get within five feet of it before it moved into the trees. And the juvenile birds were even more so. We were so close that Jared attempted to touch one, and came within six inches of the bird. The birds did not attempt flight, but did hop out of the way. In our opinions, the birds were not capable of sustained flight. We did not observe the adult male assisting or feeding the juveniles, and the juveniles appeared to be foraging on the ground for cones. They seemed to have little difficulty eating the seeds from them. We made as thorough an examination as possible of the area, but could not locate a possible nest. While searching the remainder of the cemetery, we counted seven adult White-winged Crossbills (including the orangish colored bird) and six juveniles. I returned to the cemetery on 7 May 1996 to photograph the crossbills. I immediately found three juveniles in the same location as two days earlier. No adult was present this time. Upon approaching, the three birds flew into tree branches about four feet off the ground; however, it was apparent their flight was not yet strong. They were again quite tolerant of me, and I was able to take a few pictures. Searching the rest of the cemetery did not reveal any possible nest, but did turn up two more juveniles and four adults, three males and one female. In spite of searching extensively in the areas where the majority of bird activity was, we unfortunately did not find any possible nest, nor did we see any eggs, broken or otherwise. The cemetery is located about 1/4 mile east of Lake Benton on Highway 14. It is at the top of a hill and includes a square of 40- to 50-foot pines approximately 150 by 300 yards. The pines appeared to have an excellent supply of cones near their tops. Bordering the cemetery is pasture land for many acres. Others who have seen White-winged Crossbills at the cemetery include John Schladweiler. **Roger Schroeder, 505 S. Whitney, Marshall, MN 56258.**

IDENTIFYING PACIFIC LOONS IN MINNESOTA — On 21 October 1996, Kim Eckert, Flip Rogers, and I studied a Pacific Loon *(Gavia pacifica)* near Canal Park in Duluth. The scapular feathers showed pale markings, although from a distance of 125 yards, it was difficult to determine the exact pattern. Adults in prebasic molt may still show whitish markings on the scapulars (Kaufman 1990); since the rest of its back appeared dark grayish-brown, we concluded that it was an adult rather than a juvenile. We noted and discussed its field marks: the small, straight, gray bill was usually held horizontally; the lores were blackish; the head shape was smoothly rounded and looked "puffy" from the rear; the nape was paler than the crown and back; the smudged, indistinct "chinstrap" was more like a shadow across the white throat; and the white foreneck was separated from the brownish-gray hindneck by a black vertical border. The flanks were brown, without even a suggestion of a white flank patch. The bird began preening and we watched intently as it rolled on its side, showing a dark brown "ventstrap" that was distinct and complete. A distinct and complete ventstrap was documented once before on a Pacific Loon in Duluth, a juvenile, on 22 September 1991 (***The Loon*** 63:280–281). The presence of a distinct and complete ventstrap in an adult basic-plumaged loon essentially rules out the Siberian race of the Arctic Loon *(G. Arctica viridigularis)* (Walsh 1988, Reinking and Howell 1993, Birch and Lee 1995). The presence of a well-defined chinstrap in an adult loon strongly suggests pacifica, but its absence is inconclusive. A few adult and many (21 of 46 specimens in one series) juvenile Pacific Loons lack chinstraps; however, chinstraps are also lacking on most (all?) Arctic Loons in basic



plumage (Reinking and Howell 1993). **Peder Svingen, 2602 E. 4th St., Duluth, MN 55812–1533.**

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Birch, A. and Lee, C. 1995. Identification of Pacific Diver — a potential vagrant to Europe. Birding World 8:458–466.

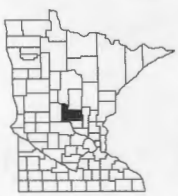
Kaufman, K. 1990. A Field Guide to Advanced Birding. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Reinking, D.L. and Howard, S.N.G. 1993. An Arctic Loon in California. Western Birds 24:189–196.

Walsh, T. 1988. Identifying Pacific Loons: some old and new problems. Birding 20:12–28.

LATE GODWITS IN MINNESOTA — On 29 September 1996, I found one Hudsonian Godwit *(Limosa haemastica)* at the Crookston lagoons, Polk County. The bird remained there through at least 5 October. I found a second Hudsonian Godwit feeding in a new impoundment at Warroad, Roseau County, on 13 October 1996. I was already aware of two recent records of Black-tailed Godwit *(L. limosa)* in Ontario (*Birders Journal* 5:176-177, 179–180). On a trip to Cape Cod last October, I learned that late godwits along the Atlantic Coast should be closely scrutinized to eliminate Black-tailed Godwit. I also knew that Hudsonian Godwits are unexpected during fall in Minnesota (casual to accidental, according to *Birds in Minnesota*, Janssen 1987), so I took detailed notes on the Crookston bird. Fortunately, the bird eventually took flight and circled the lagoons several times, giving excellent views of the underwing pattern and the extent of white on the upperwing. The underwing coverts were black, which is diagnostic for haemastica (white on *limosa*), and the white "wing stripe" was obvious on the outer wing, but barely visible on the inner wing (see Shorebirds by Hayman *et al.* 1986). This same diagnostic pattern was seen on the Roseau County bird. The separation of ***haemastica*** from ***limosa*** in juvenile and basic plumages is challenging, especially if views of the underwing are not obtained. Minnesota has at least eight previous October records (including 28, 29, and 31 October) and two early November records (1 and 5 November) attributed to Hudsonian Godwit. Although Black-tailed Godwit has been recorded only from Alaska in western North America and only twice in Ontario, the species is casual to accidental all along the Atlantic Coast (American Birding Association Checklist, fifth edition, 1966) from Newfoundland to Florida. Late godwits in Minnesota deserve a second look — or perhaps all godwits deserve a second look; most Canadian records for Black-tailed Godwit are from spring! An interesting review article (*Birders Journal* 5:184–193) by Colin Jones and Matt Holder discusses the identification of all four species of godwit recorded in North America, and lists dates and locations for all Canadian records of Black-tailed and Bar-tailed Godwits. **Peder Svingen, 2602 E. 4th St., Duluth, MN 55812–1533.**

HOODED WARBLER NEST IN MORRISON COUNTY — On 11 June at 7:30 A.M., a male Hooded Warbler was observed singing at the Camp Ripley Military Reservation in Little Falls. On 22 June, a female was also observed in the area and a nest with four eggs was found 1.5m up in a hazel bush. On 3 July, there were four chicks in the nest, and both parents were observed feeding the young. On 10 July, the nest was empty. Fledglings were not observed in the area after this date, so it is possible that the nest was predated. This is only the second recorded nesting attempt in the state for this species. The first Hooded Warbler observation (non-nesting) for Morrison County was also from Camp Ripley, in



1994 (***The Loon*** 66:118). It is possible that other breeding by this species, which was placed on the state special concern list this year by the DNR, is occurring at Camp Ripley. It is recommended that the area where these warblers and the warbler in 1994 were found (comprising about 2 km of similar habitat type) be thoroughly searched in future years. **Sam Merrill, DNR, P.O. Box 150, Little Falls, MN 56343.**

Hooded Warbler at nest, 5 July 1996, Camp Ripley, Morrison County. Photo by Bill Marchel.

ANOTHER SIGHTING OF A BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE ON LAKE WINNIBIGOSHISH —  On 10 November 1996 near Bena, on the Cass County portion of Lake Winnibigoshish, I watched a Black-legged Kittiwake *(Rissa tridactyla)* in first-winter plumage for 15 minutes as it foraged along the edge of the ice about 75 yards off shore. A strong cold front had dropped daytime temperatures more than 40 degrees and strong northwest winds concentrated the ice along the south shore of Lake Winnie. About 150 gulls, mostly Bonaparte's, were feeding in the same area as the kittiwake. I sketched its black auricular spot, black nuchal bar, distinct black "M" pattern across the upper wings, pale gray back and inner forewing, and white triangular-shaped patch along the trailing edge of the upper wing. The tail appeared notched with a black terminal band. Several times when the gull banked in flight, its black legs and feet were visible. The bill also appeared black. This may have been the same individual that I found nearby on 28 September, although I had no other sightings during weekly surveys of Bonaparte's Gulls on Lake Winnie from late September through mid-November. **Peder Svingen, 2602 E. 4th St., Duluth, MN 55812–1533.**

A SECOND KITTSON COUNTY RECORD OF LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH —  On 6 October 1996 in Kittson County, I discovered a Louisiana Waterthrush *(Seiurus motacilla)* in a wooded area along the north branch of Two Rivers, just west of the town of Lancaster. Its call note first attracted my attention because it sounded flatter, more "hollow" and less ringing than the call note of the Northern Waterthrush *(S. noveboracensis)*. Eventually, the bird came into view and its pure white supercilium was immediately obvious. Its crown, nape, back, wings, and tail were all dark brown, and its breast and flanks had thick, brown streaks. The shape of its supercilium was fairly straight, flaring posteriorly; this was unlike the buff-colored, tapering, curving supercilium of Northern Waterthrush. Other differences from Northern Waterthrush were its whitish, unstreaked throat; whitish breast that contrasted with buff flanks and crissum; and bright pink legs. Its dusky bill was pinkish near the base of the lower mandible; the bill overall seemed proportionaly large and especially thick at the base. The bird bobbed its tail-end constantly as it walked along the bank of the creek. Curson *et al.* (*Warblers of the Americas*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1994, p. 167–168) state that differences in bobbing behavior and foraging posture can be noticeable; Louisiana Waterthrush bobs its entire rear-end and forages with its head held slightly lower than its body, while Northern Waterthrush flicks its tail only and forages with its head slightly above its body. During much of my 20-minute observation, the bird was only 20–30 feet away as it apparently foraged for insects among the tree branches contained in a small beaver dam. I did not notice these behavioral differences at the time. A strong cold front had moved through northwestern Minnesota during the previous night and there were numerous kinglets, waxwings, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and Purple Finches, plus a few creepers and sparrows migrating along this creek. This sighting represents the latest date on record for Louisiana Waterthrush anywhere in Minnesota; the previous late date was 4 October. The location is far away from this species' usual range in the southeast and east-central regions, but most surprising is the fact that this is actually a second county record. The first was 9 August 1988 at Lake Bronson State Park (***The Loon*** 61:46–47) along the south branch of Two Rivers! Other than one May record from Red Lake County (***The Loon*** 60:91), there are no other records from the northwest region of Minnesota. **Peder Svingen, 2602 E. 4th St., Duluth, MN 55812–1533.**

Index to *The Loon*
Volume 68

Compiled by Robert Janssen, Anthony Hertzel and Ann Hertzel

Corrections to *The Loon*

The photograph of the Northern Cardinal (***The Loon*** 68:153) should have been credited to Beth Siverhus.

The Note of Interest entitled "A Western Tanager in Sherburne County" (***The Loon*** 68:175–176) should have been titled "An Aberrant Scarlet Tanager in Sherburne County".

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.

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