

Illinois & Indiana



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Fall weather was generally mild and wet. In Chicago, where November can be brutal, temperatures averaged 2.5° F above normal. Perhaps as a result of the moderate weather, late-season frontal activity on Lake Michigan produced unexceptional bird movements. As often happens, assessments of the migration were mixed. The only quantitative evaluation came from northeastern Indiana, where Jim Haw compared Neotropical migrant numbers at Fox Island Park with data collected there over the past 23 years: 23 species were above the mean, three equaled the mean, and 18 were below average, suggesting a fairly typical autumn flight there. Memorable aspects of the season included some spectacular rarities, a bumper

jaeger flight, a plethora of banded Northern Saw-whet Owls, and a Northern Shrike invasion.

Abbreviations: Carl. L. (Carlyle L. in Clinton, Fayette, and Bond Counties, IL); I.B.S.P. (Illinois Beach S.P.); L. Chau. (L. Chataqua N.W.R., IL); L. Gibson (sw. Indiana); M.C.H. (Michigan City Harbor, Indiana lakefront); Mill. B. (Miller Beach, IN, the southernmost point on L. Michigan).

LOONS THROUGH IBISES

The Region enjoyed another excellent Red-throated Loon flight, with 83 birds in Indiana and 17 in Illinois. Maximum daily tallies included 10 at Mill. B. 22 Nov (MT, BJG, PBG) and 9 at I.B.S.P. 15 Nov (DTW, AFS). The season's only Pacific Loon appeared at I.B.S.P. 28 Nov (AFS). Once again, the peak Common Loon flight occurred within a very narrow window. Maximum counts included an impressive 429 at L. Lemon, IN 6 Nov (JHv, SHv, DRW), 424 at Mill. B. 5 Nov (JJM), and 135 in East Fork L., Richland, IL 6 Nov (LH). Red-necked Grebes were not

reported in Illinois, but an above-average 7 were noted in Indiana. The Eared Grebe flight was near normal, with 7 birds in Illinois and 2 in Indiana. Western Grebes were surprisingly scarce; one on the Mississippi R., in Hancock, IL 22 Nov (AD) constituted the season's only report.

American White Pelicans numbers remained at the high levels of recent years. The peak tally was 5000 at Horseshoe L., Madison, IL 7 Oct (JZ). Double-crested Cormorant numbers were also quite high, with a maximum of 5500 at Carl. L. 31 Oct (KAM, CL). Though numbers were modest in Illinois, several large Great Egret counts were logged in Indiana, where the peak tally was 468 birds along the flooded Wabash R., mainly in Parke 3 Aug (AWB). Fall Cattle Egrets were scarce, with only five reports in Illinois and one in Indiana; the largest count was of 25 in St. Clair, IL 8 Aug (KAM). A Yellow-crowned Night-Heron lingered late in Chicago's Lincoln Park to 3 Sep (GAW). A juv. White Ibis was at Carl. L. 10-11 Aug (DMK, ph. TM, m. ob.), and a White-faced Ibis was at the same site 20-21 Sep (KAM, DMK, ph. TM et al.).

WATERFOWL THROUGH CRANES

Peak goose tallies included 126 Greater White-fronteds at L. Chau. 21 Nov (RBj, SBj), 3000 Snows at Carl. L. 16 Nov (DMK), and 4 Ross's at Carl. L. 2 Nov (DMK). It was an above-average fall for Tundra Swans, with a state record 280 at Pigeon River W.M.A., IN 6 Nov (Haw, FH, MW). Puddle-duck numbers were near normal; noteworthy counts included 4700 Gadwalls at Hennepin L., IL 19 Nov (DFS) and 3800 Northern Shovelers at Clear L., IL 30 Oct (RBj, SBj). Diving duck reports were mixed. On the down side, the Region's maximum Redhead count was only 338 birds, but the report of 8300 Greater Scaup on the Lake, IL lakefront 15 Nov (KAM, CTI, TK) represented an exceptional fall count, perhaps the highest ever. It was a good autumn for sea ducks. The Surf Scoter flight on L. Michigan was well above average, and inland birds were recorded at 11 locations, including a maximum of 7 at East Fork L., Richland, IL 26 Oct (LH). White-winged Scoters were less prevalent, with below-average numbers on the lakefront; the largest inland count was only 7 at Lock & Dam 14, Rock Island, IL (SF). A strong Black Scoter movement was highlighted by 30 birds at Lake Forest, IL 25 Oct (RHu), along with inland birds at five locations. A single Harlequin Duck was seen at Mill. B. 19 & 29 Oct (JJM, KJB), the season's only report. One to 4 Long-tailed Ducks were recorded at seven inland sites; as expected, the peak count occurred on L. Michigan, where 9 were recorded at Evanston 1 Nov (WS).

Hawkwatchers at I.B.S.P. recorded a fine season. Noteworthy daily totals at that site

(all reported by VB) included 51 Osprey 24 Sep, 244 Sharp-shinned Hawks 15 Oct, 38 Red-shouldered Hawks 13 Nov, 3193 Broad-winged Hawks 24 Sep, and 132 Merlins 12 Oct. Four Swainson's Hawks were still in Kane, IL 7 Sep (R&AM). In early Nov, a strong Rough-legged Hawk movement occurred along the L. Michigan shore, with 17 reported on the Indiana lakefront 1 Nov (JKC, EMH, JJM, MT) and 15 at I.B.S.P., 7 Nov (VB). The vanguard of a good Golden Eagle flight consisted of an ad. that arrived at East Fork L., IL on the unusually early date of 1 Oct (LH). An excellent autumn Sora tally of 25 birds was logged at Spunky Bottoms, Brown, IL 29 Aug (TM, MD). Once again Common Moorhen numbers were low. This fall's maximum tally was a paltry 6 birds at Horseshoe L., Madison, IL (KAM). The peak American Coot count, by a wide margin, was 21,900 at Hennepin L., IL 19 Nov (DFS). The Region's Sandhill Crane population continues to flourish. This year's movement through the Jasper-Pulaski W.M.A. staging area peaked at 24,619 on 18 Dec (*fide* JSC), and the maximum Illinois tally was 3100 at L. Villa 7 Nov (RBI).

SHOREBIRDS

Shorebirds were fairly well distributed across both states. The maximum American Golden-Plover tally, a pitifully low 15 birds, was recorded in McHenry, IL 23 Aug (R&AM) and duplicated in Jay, IN 4 Oct (Haw et al.). The peak Black-bellied Plover tally was a more encouraging 43 birds at Mill. B. 25 Oct (MT). Among the 8 Piping Plovers reported this season were 2 juvs. banded on L. Michigan and a bird that lingered at L. Gibson through 30 Oct (ph. JJM), a new late date for Indiana. Black-necked Stilts were restricted to Illinois, where 7 were found at Grassy Slough, Johnson 8 Aug (FB) and another at Rend L. 14 Sep (LH). It was a good fall for American Avocets, with double-digit counts in both states; the maximum tally was of 29 at Clear L., IL 16 & 29 Oct (RBj, SBj). By far the largest Lesser Yellowlegs tally consisted of the 3032 birds at L. Chau. 31 Jul (RBj, SBj). The lakefront's heavy Whimbrel movement, which began in late summer, extended through 25 Aug, with a total of 14 birds for the fall season. A single inland Whimbrel was at Carl. L. 6 Sep (WR). Hudsonian Godwit reports consisted of 4 at Mill. B. 21 Aug (JJM, KJB), 6 at Fermi, IL 31 Aug (ES), and a remarkable flock of 26 that flew over M.C.H. 26 Aug (BJG). Marbled Godwits were unusually widespread, with inland reports of 2 at Carl. L. 26 Aug (DMK), plus singles at Rend L. 4 Sep (FB) and Carl. L. 13 Sep (KAM). The only lakefront report consisted of 4 Marbleds at M.C.H. 1 Sep (JJM).

An average Red Knot flight yielded an alternate-plumaged bird (rarely seen in this season) at Mill. B. 1 Aug (JJM) and an inland report in Scott, IN 2-28 Aug (JDW). Peak counts among the smaller sandpipers included 610 Semipalmateds at Clear L., IL 29 Aug (RBj, SBj), 11 Westerns at Carl. L. 30 Aug (DMK, MD, TM), 500 Least at Horseshoe L., Madison, IL 1 Aug (KAM), 3000 Pectorals at Horseshoe L., Madison, IL 3 Aug (WR), 130 Dunlin at Rend L., IL 8 Nov (LSy), and 32 Buff-breasteds at L. Chau. 21 Aug (RBj, SBj). Highlight of the shorebird flight was the appearance of single Sharp-tailed Sandpipers in both states. A juv. appeared briefly at the Wakarusa sewage ponds, Elkhart (same location as last year's Mountain Plover) 25 Sep (DSt, ph. †JKC, ph. JJM et al.) to provide Indiana's 2nd record. Another juv. Sharp-tailed, which proved considerably more cooperative, was discovered at the Blackhawk Forest Preserve, Kane, IL 28 Sep and remained through 6 Oct (SC, ph., †GAW, ph. TM, m. ob.). Two record-late juv. Baird's Sandpipers were found at Brookville Res., IN 6 Dec (DCD). The Region's only Purple Sandpipers consisted of 2 birds at M.C.H. 8 Nov (BJG, DL). A count of 55 Stilt Sandpipers in Vigo, IN 5 Oct (PS) provided a record count for the state, and a Ruff at Quiver L., IL 11-14 Oct (KR, LA, DMK, ph. TM, AFS et al.) generated considerable excitement. A tardy Wilson's Phalarope lingered at Sanganois W.M.A. until 11 Oct (TM). The peak Red-necked Phalarope tally was 4 at L. Chau. 11-14 Sep (KR, HDB, TM, AFS). Single inland Red Phalaropes were at L. Chau. 11-14 Sep, (HDB, TM) and at Carl. L. 27 Sep (DMK).

JAEGERS THROUGH TERNS

It was a remarkable year for Parasitic Jaegers on s. L. Michigan. The season got off to a fast start when 16 Parasitics (2 ads., 14 juvs.) were identified at Mill. B. 4 Sep (JJM, PBG, KJB); Sep ultimately yielded 91 jaegers, 48 of which were Parasitics. At least 2 individuals landed on beaches, allowing close study: one at M.C.H. 14-19 Sep (ph. JKC, ph. JJM, m. ob.) and another at Montrose

25-29 Sep (ph. RHu, ph. TM, ph. GAW, m. ob., *Chicago Field Museum). The Parasitics, along with an ad. Long-tailed Jaeger at Mill. B. 4 Sep (JJM, PBG) and 46 unidentified jaegers, combined to generate a season record 102 jaegers for the Indiana lakefront.

The gull flight by contrast was rather mundane, with the exception being the ad. Black-tailed Gull found by Brendan Grube 5 Aug at Mill. B.—Indiana's first record and only the 2nd report for the entire Midwest. This bird did not linger here but was relocated two days later on Chicago's Montrose Beach, where first detected at mid-morning by Michael Miller; the bird remained there until mid-day (RHu, ph. JKC, m. ob.). Franklin's Gulls peaked 19 Oct, when 150 were counted at Carl. L. (DMK). A strong Little Gull flight on the Indiana lakefront began with a crisp juv. at Mill. B. 26 Aug (ph. JJM) and peaked 14 Sep, when a state record 3 birds were seen at M.C.H. (JJM, BJG). Glaucous Gulls were scarce, with only 2 reported at different locations on the Chicago lakefront 22 Nov (RHu, JP), possibly the same individual. The Black-legged Kittiwake flight consisted of but one bird, a juv. at Mill. B. 13 Nov (ASi, JJM, LPv, JGb et al.). Sabine's Gulls fared considerably better, with 14 reported on the Indiana lakefront, plus 10 inland birds. Inland reports included 2 juvs. at L. Springfield, IL 20-26 Sep (HDB et al.) and 2 more at Carl. L. 27 Sep (DMK, m. ob.), plus single juvs. at Brookville Res., IN 27 Sep (WHB) and at L. Lemon, IN 1-10 Oct (DRW, JHr, ph.Sttv, m.o.b.). Peak *Sterna* tern tallies included 135 Caspian Terns at Mill. B. 12 Aug (MT), 2185 Commons at M.C.H. 23 Sep (JJM, PBG, KJB), and 81 Forster's at Carl. L. 6 Sep (DMK). A strong Aug movement of Black Terns peaked at M.C.H. on the 26th, when 248 were counted (JJM).

DOVES THROUGH PIPIT

The season's maximum Eurasian Collared-Dove count was a hefty 30 birds at Waltonville, IL 5 Aug (DMK, TM, ASe). As evidenced by several good counts, including 8 at Carl. L. 4 Aug (DMK), the fall Yellow-billed Cuckoo flight was perhaps the best in

Table 1: Rufous Hummingbirds in the Illinois & Indiana Region, Fall/Winter 2003-2004.

Age/gender	Location	Date	Identification	Observers/Banders
imm. female	Porter, IN	14 Sep-24 Nov	* specimen	Bernell & Diane Grieger
ad. male	Monroe, IN	20 Sep+	photographs	Jerry & Trudy Marsischky
imm. female	Vanderburgh, IN	3 Nov+	banded 28 Dec 2003	C. Hutcheson, <i>fide</i> SSo
ad. female	Monroe, IN	11 Nov+	banded 7 Jan 2004	C. Hutcheson, <i>fide</i> CMY
female	Richland, IL	12 Nov+	banded 21 Nov 2003	PW, LH, VK
imm. female	Marion, IN	21 Nov+	banded 21 Dec 2003	Allen Chartier, <i>fide</i> DG
female	Kane, IL	unknown	banded 6 Dec 2003	VK et al.

*specimen preserved at the Joseph Moore Museum, Earlham College.

two decades. Although Long-eared Owl reports were sparse, Short-eared Owls were more than plentiful, with numerous sightings that included a maximum of 75 at the reclaimed Hawthorn strip mine, *Sullivan*, IN 30 Nov (DRW). The s. Indiana fall banding season for Northern Saw-whet Owls proved spectacular (124 total banded). The *Brown* station banded 70 and had one foreign recapture (RBt), while a new site in *Greene* banded 54 (JAG). The Region's Common Nighthawk reports were disturbingly low: the maximum count was only 150 birds. A Whip-poor-will at the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore's West Beach 25 Oct (JKC, SBg, RP et al.) provided a new late date for the state. Over the season, Vernon Kleen banded 348 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds at various Illinois locations. It was a record autumn for Rufous Hummingbirds, with 5 identified in Indiana and 2 in Illinois (see Table 1).

Flycatchers appeared in good numbers. Noteworthy reports included a remarkably late Alder at Carl. L. 27 Sep, (DMK, m. ob.), 2 Willows in Chicago's Lincoln Park 20 Sep (GAW), and 29 Eastern Kingbirds at Rock Cut S.P., IL 27 Aug (DTW). The best flycatchers, however, were 2 Say's Phoebes: Indiana's 3rd at Mill. B. 29 Sep (ph. †KJB, †PBG, Nila Grube) and another at Carl. L.

31 Oct (ph. DMK, CM, JE, ASe). Northern Shrikes invaded this fall, with 28 birds in Illinois and another 8 in Indiana. The first arrival was in *Cook*, IL 4 Oct (Ralph Herbst), and the peak count of 2 was logged at three Illinois locations 19–23 Oct. Vireos were quite plentiful; season highlights included a record-late Blue-headed Vireo in the Indiana Dunes 16 Nov (BJG) and a remarkable 13 Philadelphia Vireos on the Chicago lakefront 20 Sep (GAW). Three tardy Fish Crows lingered at Horseshoe L., *Madison*, IL until 10 Nov (KAM).

It was a poor fall for Purple Martins; the Region's maximum reported count was only 150 birds at Wolf L., IL 14 Aug (WJM). Peak totals of other swallows were more encouraging, with 25,000 Trees in *Bond*, IL 1 Nov (KAM, DMK, FB, TM), 600 Northern Rough-wingeds at L. Chau. 6 Sep (KAM), 3000 Banks at L. Chau. 9 Aug (LLH), and 600 Cliffs in *Parke*, IN 3 Aug (AWB). Sedge Wrens staged a good flight, which included 20 in *Greene* and *Sullivan*, IN 12 Aug (LSt) and 11 in Kankakee, IL 2 Aug (JHz). Casual in the Region only a decade ago, Townsend's Solitaires have become regular fall visitors. Reports this autumn include singletons at Lyons Woods, IL 19 Nov (AFS, ASi) and at West Beach, IN 21 Nov (JJM). Veeries were scarce, with only sin-

gles reported in Illinois and a maximum count of 4+ in Indiana. In contrast, Swainson's Thrush executed a strong flight, with 220+ estimated passing in *Brown*, IN 20 Sep (JHv, SHv) and 100 on the Chicago lakefront 20 Sep (WS). A Hermit Thrush tally of 75 in Chicago's Lincoln Park 16 Oct (WS) was also noteworthy. The Region's only Varied Thrush was in Bushnell, IL 20 Nov (LLH). American Pipits appeared in good numbers across the Region, with peak tallies of 100 at Pigeon River W.M.A., IN 18 Oct (Haw, FH, SS), 90 at Kankakee W.M.A., IN 8 Nov (DG), and 75+ in *Macon*, IL 2 Nov (TM, MD).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Fall warblers generated few comments, suggesting a fairly typical flight. Tennessee Warblers were reported in excellent numbers, highlighted by a peak of 81 in *Cook*, IL 31 Aug (DFS). A very tardy Yellow Warbler lingered in Chicago's Lincoln Park until 1 Oct (GAW). Noteworthy maximum counts of various *Dendroica* warblers included 20 Cape Mays at L. Monroe, IN 27 Sep (Carolyn Begley, Jiri Dadok), 75 Palms in Chicago's Grant Park 19 Sep (DFS), and 18 Bay-breasteds at the Chicago Botanic Garden 30 Aug (AA). Out of the blue, a *Grace's Warbler* appeared on the Chicago lakefront at Mon-



After its 5 August 2003 cameo appearance on the Indiana lakefront, this striking Black-tailed Gull thrilled a score of Chicago birders when it spent the morning of 7 August on Montrose Beach. *Digiscoped photograph by John K. Cassidy.*



Small Arctic-breeding larids retain juvenal plumage for a relatively short period, so birders rarely encounter this plumage in the Lower 48 United States. This juvenile Little Gull graciously sat for a portrait 26 August 2003 on Miller Beach, Lake County, Indiana. *Photograph by Jeffrey J. McCoy.*



Always a crowd-pleaser, a Ruff at Quiver Lake, Illinois 11-14 October (here 12 October) 2003 generated considerable excitement. *Digiscoped photograph by Travis Mahan.*



Casual throughout the Illinois & Indiana Region, this juvenile White Ibis, discovered by Dan Kassebaum at Carlyle Lake, Illinois 10 August 2003, lingered through the following day. *Digiscoped photograph by Travis Mahan.*

trose Beach 8 Sep (Clara Coen, JP, ph. RHu, ph. KH, m. ob.). The bird was reasonably cooperative at Chicago lakefront's famous Magic Hedge for that day only. Migrant Common Yellowthroats were unusually plentiful; peak tallies included 29 in the Lake, IN traps 16 Sep (JJM, KJB) and 21 on the Chicago lakefront 20 Sep (GAW). Several correspondents noted a decline in Canada Warbler numbers.

A late Summer Tanager in Monroe, IN 18 Nov (SE), constituted that state's first Nov record, and a Scarlet Tanager in n. Porter, IN 5 Nov (BJG) provided a new late date for Indiana. A very late Blue Grosbeak was found at Rend. L., IL 19 Oct (DMK). Unusually high Dickcissel numbers were recorded in Aug, with a maximum of 69 in Greene, IN 12 Aug (LSt, DRW). Rarely found in cen. Indiana, a Clay-colored Sparrow in downtown Indianapolis 2 Oct (RLH, LAC) was quite noteworthy. A remarkable 450 Savannah Sparrows in Greene and Sullivan, IN 21 Oct (DRW) provided a record-high tally for the state. Harris's Sparrows were well represented in the fall flight with a half-dozen in each state. Smith's Longspurs made two appearances this fall, with 8-10 in Richland, IL 2 Nov (LH) and a single at Mill. B. 29 Oct (JJM), which provided Indiana's first fall record in three years. Excellent Bobolink numbers were recorded

this fall—245 at L. Chau. 6 Sep (KAM, HDB) and 20 still in Montgomery, IN 18 Oct (AWB, LAC, RLH et al.).

The winter finch flight did not meet expectations, as often happens. Among species in this group, Purple Finches made the strongest showing, with modest to good numbers across the Region. On the down side, no crossbills or Evening Grosbeaks were reported. Beginning in mid-Nov, small numbers of Common Redpolls appeared in both states near L. Michigan. The Pine Siskin movement was late and mediocre; the peak tally was 65-70 at Chicago's Morton Arboretum 29 Nov (UG).

Contributors cited (subregional editors in boldface): Alan Anderson, Louise Augustine, Susan Bagby (SBg), Frank Bennett, Vic Berardi, Richard Biss (RBi), Richard Bjorklund (RBj), Sigurd Bjorklund (SBj), H. David Bohlen, Ross Brittain (RBt), Kenneth J. Brock, **Alan W. Bruner (Indiana)**, William H. Buskirk, Lee A. Casebere, John K. Casady, John S. Castrale, Scott Cohrs, Myrna Deaton, Al Dierkes, David C. Dister, Joe Eades, Scott Evans, Steve Freed, Urs Geiser, Don Gorney, Joel Greenberg (JGb), Brendan J. Grube,

Peter B. Grube, Jess A. Gwinn, Leroy Harrison, Jim Haw (Haw), Frannie Headings, Roger L. Hedge, Jim Hengeveld (JHv), Susan Hengeveld (SHv), Hed Hertz (JHz), Kanae Hirabayashi, Larry L. Hood, Edward M. Hopkins, Robert Hughes (RHu), Dan M. Kassebaum, Vernon Kleen, Tim Kuessel, Dan Leach, Craig Litteken, Travis Mahan, Charlene Malone, Walter J. Masrcisz, Jeffrey J. McCoy, Keith A. McMullen, Robert and Anita Morgan (R & AM), Cathy Meyer (CMY), Randy Pals, Larry Peavler (LPv), John Purcell, Kevin Richmond, William Rowe, Sandy Schacht (SSc), Peter Scott, Eric Secker, Al Seppi (ASe), Wes Serafin, Andy Sigler (ASi), Sharon Sorenson (SSo), Leonard Stanley (LSy), Lee Sterrenburg (LSt), Alan F. Stokie, Dan Stoltzfus (DSt), **Douglas F. Stotz (Illinois)**, Craig Taylor (CTI), Michael Topp, Peter Weber, J. Dan Webster, Donald R. Whitehead, Dan T. Williams Jr., Geoffrey A. Williamson, Marisa Windell, Jim Ziebol. Many other observers contributed information to the various state lists, but could not be personally acknowledged. Thanks to all of them as well. 🐦



Thayer's Gulls occur far less frequently at interior sites in the Illinois & Indiana region than on Lake Michigan shores; consequently, this juvenile at Lake Decatur, Illinois 17 October 2003 was of great interest. *Digitized photograph by Travis Mahan.*



Quite rare away from Lake Michigan in the Illinois & Indiana region, this Great Black-backed Gull appeared in central Illinois at Lake Decatur, 13 and (here) 14 August 2003. *Digitized photograph by Travis Mahan.*



In September 2003, the southern Lake Michigan lakefront was inundated with Parasitic Jaegers, including at least two that spent time on the beach. This juvenile was on Chicago's Montrose Beach 25-29 September. This bird ultimately died and has been preserved as a specimen in the Chicago Museum of Natural History. *Digitized photograph by Travis Mahan.*



The Illinois & Indiana Region enjoyed some eight Piping Plovers in fall 2003. This bird paused in its migration at Miller Beach, Indiana, the southernmost point on Lake Michigan, on 30 August. *Digitized photograph by John K. Casady.*