Illinois & Indiana



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warm autumn was escort to a strange fall migration. Many expected species appeared in numbers far below normal (e.g., Common Loons, gulls, and ducks), whereas unexpected irruptive species appeared in unprecedented numbers, including a bumper flight of Redbreasted Nuthatches and scattered sightings of Bohemian Waxwing, White-winged Crossbill, and Evening Grosbeak. The appearance of irruptive species in fall 2004 was quite extraordinary (see the Red-breasted Nuthatch S.A.), probably indicative of a poor cone crop, a productive breeding season, or both. The overall migration of Neotropical migrant passerines was generally sparse and slightly late; at Fort Wayne's

Fox Island Park, for example, Jim Haw observed only ten per cent of migrants in numbers above their 24-year means.

Abbreviations: Carl. L. (Carlyle Lake in Clinton, Fayette, and Bond, IL); Chau. (Chautauqua N.W.R., IL); I.B.S.P. (Illinois Beach S.P., on the lakefront some 17 km s. of the Wisconsin border); M.C.H. (Michigan City Harbor, IN lakefront); Mill. B. (Miller Beach, IN, the southernmost point on L. Michigan).

LOONS THROUGH STORK

Red-throated Loons staged a fairly typical fall flight, with 56 in Indiana (all on the lakefront) and 8 in Illinois. In contrast, the Region was awash with Pacific Loons, with an unprecedented six in Illinois and five in Indiana. All reports consisted of singles except for 2 at Chau. 4 & 11 Nov (KR). At the other extreme, Common Loons were disturbingly scarce, especially on L. Michigan, where numbers declined drastically; the Region's peak tally consisted of 226 on L. Monroe, IN 26 Nov (LWS). Maximum counts of

the smaller grebes included 145 Pied-billeds at Hennepin L., IL 24 Sep (DFS), 345 Horneds along the Indiana lakefront 25 Nov (JJM), and 3 Eareds at Carl. L. 11 Sep (TAM, KAM, m.ob.). It was an excellent fall for Western Grebes, with 4 in each state. Five Red-necked Grebes (3 in Indiana, 2 in Illinois) was also above average.

American White Pelican numbers remained high, with four Illinois counts exceeding 2000 birds; the only Indiana report consisted of 8 at M.C.H. 10 Oct (JM). Brown Pelican(s) created quite a stir this fall, as up to 3 imms. dallied in the Region. The initial sighting, on the Waukegan, IL lakefront 27-31 Aug (DA, AFS), was followed by a report some 90 km away and across L. Michigan at M.C.H. 6 Sep (BJG). There were subsequent but regular sightings along the Chicago (KW, CT, RHu) and Indiana lakefronts until 11 Oct, when the last L. Michigan sighting occurred at Mill. B. (MT, ph. JMc, †m.ob.). The final report was from Clinton L., IL 7-28 Nov (GL, TAM, UG, ph., †CLW, m.ob.). On 26 Oct, a juv. Northern Gannet flew past Mill. B. just 20 m off the beach (†KJB). Noteworthy egret tallies included 1190 Great Egrets at Chau. 6 Aug (RBj, SBj), 27 Little Blue Herons at L. Cal. 27 Aug (WJM), and 73 Snowy Egrets in Calhoun, IL 17 Aug (LLH). Although 72 Cattle Egrets were reported at Chau. 23 Aug (LLH), this species went unreported in Indiana, where it is becoming quite scarce. An imm. Wood Stork, initially discovered by Forest Preserve employees, was likely present at Crawdad Slough, Cook, IL for over 30 days (fide WSS); birders observed it 7-12 Oct (†B&KF, AM, †WJM, ph. CLW, ph. KAM, m.ob.).

WATERFOWL THROUGH CRANES

Goose numbers were generally more modest than in recent years. Despite confusion regarding the separation of hutchinsii from small parvipes, Cackling Goose reports continue to roll in, with 5400 in Stark, IL 11 Nov (JW) and 2500+ in Winnebago, IL 7 Nov (DTW). A Brant observed in DeKalb, 1L 28 Oct was reportedly photographed (EWW). Dabbling duck numbers were modest to low; noteworthy high counts included 11,378 Gadwall at Chau. 19 Nov (RBj, SBj) and 2800 Blue-winged Teal at Hennepin L., IL 18 Sep (DFS). An exception to the feeble Aythya flight on L. Michigan, a fine count of 3600 Greater Scaup was logged at Highland Park, IL 21 Nov (GAW). Also quite impressive for an inland site was 6000 Lesser Scaup in Hancock, IL 12 Nov (AD). Scoter numbers were down across the board, but the Whitewinged flight was especially poor, with a peak tally of only 8 at Mill. B. 11 Nov (PBG). Long-tailed Ducks peaked 20 Nov with 42 on the Cook, IL lakefront (GAW). The Common Merganser flight was virtually nonexistent: only one bird was reported. However, a strong Red-breasted Merganser movement was highlighted by a count of 1011 at Glencoe, IL 20 Nov (GAW, C.O.S.).

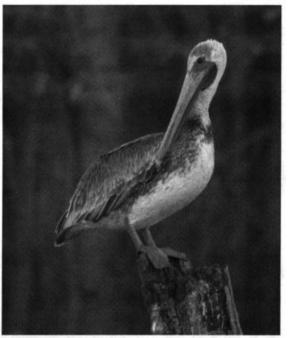
On 15 Aug, Tim Martin saw a Swallow-tailed Kite while driving along 1-90 (Indiana Toll Road) in LaPorte, IN. Local birders were unable to relocate the bird the next day, but on 17 Aug Kenn Kaufman, who by chance was also transiting the state on I-90, again spotted the bird at the previous location and quickly spread the word. This individual, apparently a young bird, was subsequently seen and photographed by scores of observers and remained until at least 28 Aug (Seth Keller). This is Indiana's northernmost record in more than a half-century. Noteworthy maxima from the I.B.S.P. hawkwatch included 17 Osprev 6 Sep. 194 Sharpshinneds 16 Oct. 125 Broad-wingeds 24 Sep, a record 506 Red-taileds 31 Oct, and a record 47 Peregrines 24 Sep (all by VB). Northern Goshawks were exceedingly scarce, with only 4 reported

in Illinois and one in Indiana. The season's only Swainson's Hawks were in McHenry, IN, where 5 were reported 15 Aug (A&RM), another the following day (DF), and one on 4 Sep (A&RM). It was an above-average autumn for Rough-legged Hawks, with some 81 in Indiana and 14 in Illinois. Without doubt, the raptor of the season was a juv. light-morph Ferruginous Hawk discovered at Clinton L., DeWitt, IL 25 Nov (ph. CLW). Both Golden Eagles and Merlins appeared in typical numbers; peak tally for the latter species was of 42 at I.B.S.P. 2 Oct (VB). A fine autumn count of 18 Soras was logged at

Chau. 24 Sep (RBj, SBj). Common Moorhen numbers continue to be encouraging, with 11 in Indiana and 9 in Illinois. An excellent count of 3180 migrating Sandhill Cranes was logged in Cook, IL 28 Nov (DFS, FMS).

SHOREBIRDS

Maximum plover tallies included 22 Black-bellieds at George L., IN 14 Oct (JKC et al.), 75 Semipalmateds at Chau. 21 Aug (TAM, MD), and 1000 Killdeer at Carl. L. 24 Jul (KAM). A total of 5 Piping Plovers, including 3 at Montrose Harbor 30–31 Aug (GAW), were reported in Illinois, and 4 more, highlighted by a late juv at Mill. B. 26 Sep (JJM), were found in Indiana. Black-necked Stilts were plen-



Up to three immature Brown Pelicans visited the Illinois & Indiana Region in autumn 2004. This individual was photographed at Clinton Lake, Dewitt County, on 22 November. Photograph by Christopher L. Wood.

tiful, with at least 10 in Illinois and 3 in Indiana; the latter included 2 juvs. in *Greene* 13 Aug (ph. LWS) and the state's first Oct record in *Benton* 1 Oct (EMH). An even later stilt was recorded in *St. Clair*, IL 24–27 Oct (FHo, KAM). Notable maximum shorebird counts included 95 Greater Yellowlegs in *Putnam*, IL 29 Jul (DFS), 1183 Lesser Yellowlegs at Chau. 20 Aug (RBj, SBj), 31 Solitary Sandpipers at Wadsworth, IL 31 Jul (AFS), 28 Ruddy Turnstones at M.C.H. 9 Aug (BJG), 23 Baird's Sandpipers at L. Cal. 29 Aug (WJM, JA), 6000 Pectoral Sandpipers at Chau. 10 Aug (CLW), 29 Stilt Sandpipers at

Brookville, IN (WHB), 44 Buff-breasted Sandpipers at Chau. 23 Aug (LLH), 314 Short-billed Dowitchers at Chau. 3 Sep (RBj, SBj), and 125 Long-billed Dowitchers at Chau. 23 Oct (TAM).

Whimbrels staged another strong flight, with 14 in Indiana and 3 in Illinois; the peak tally consisted of 4 at Mill. B. 28 Aug (PBG). Of 6 Marbled Godwits reported, 4 were in Indiana, a rather poor season. Hudsonian Godwit reports were restricted to Illinois, where a maximum of 10 was reported at Chau. 26 Aug (KR). Red Knots were unusually plentiful, with 16 in Indiana and 8 in Illinois; the presence of 4 inland ads. at a Boone, IN sod farm 26-29 Aug (LPv, LAB, ph. et al.) was quite unusual. White-rumped Sandpiper reports included a juv. at Chau. 21 Aug (TAM, MD), a juv. at George L., IN 16 Oct (ph. JKC, SRB et al.), and 2 in Steuben, IN 16 Oct (Haw). Purple Sandpiper numbers were up: 2 were at I.B.S.P. 3 Nov (B&KF), one was at Waukegan 4-16 Nov (DD, AFS, CF, RHu), and one was at M.C.H. 20 Nov (RJP, m.ob.). A juv. Ruff

was reported without details at Mermet L., IL 13 Oct (FB). Most impressive was a count of 8 Red-necked Phalaropes at Carl. L. 11 Sep (KAM, DMK, TAM, MD). A juv. Red-necked was also discovered in *Boone*, IN 17 Sep (DG et al.), where this species is rare. Three Red Phalaropes were reported on the Indiana lakefront; an inland juv. was present in *Monroe*, IN 12–15 Oct (JHv, ph. SHv, MC et al.); and an early migrant was discovered at Lake Decatur, IL 15–16 Sep (MD, TAM, CLW).

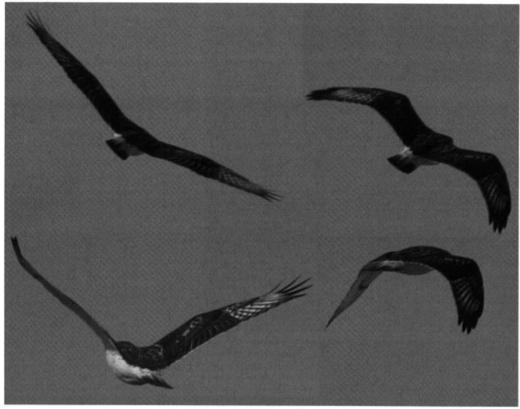
JAEGERS THROUGH ALCIDS

All three jaegers were reported. A juv. Poma-

rine Jaeger flew past Mill. B. 7 Nov (JKC, EMH, JJM, BJG, PBG, †m.ob.). Inland Parasitic Jaegers are quite rare, so the light morph juv. at Carl. L. 18-26 Sep (DMK, KAM, m.ob.) was noteworthy. Among the 26 Parasitic Jaegers logged on the Indiana lakefront was a record-tying early arrival at Mill. B. 19 Aug (JJM). Remarkably, 2 juv. Long-tailed Jaegers were at Carl. L. 6-25 Sep (JE, DMK, KAM, ph., m.ob.), and another juv. appeared at Mill. B. 7 Sep (]]M). The season's 5 Laughing Gulls is about average, but a peak tally of 800+ Franklin's Gulls at Carl. L. 7 Nov (WCR) constituted a fine count. For the 2nd consecutive year, a late-Aug juv. Little Gull appeared at Mill. B.; this



This long-staying immature Wood Stork was likely present in a Cook County, Illinois forest preserve from mid-September through 12 (here 11) October 2004. Photograph by Keith A. McMullen.



An immature Ferruginous Hawk at Clinton Lake, Dewitt County, Illinois 22 November 2004 provided a fine addition to the autumn raptor list. The species is casual in the Illinois & Indiana Region. Photographs by Christopher L. Wood.

year's bird was photographed 28 Aug (ph. MT, BJG, JJM). A first-year Mew Gull, found at Clinton L., IL 22 Nov (vt., †CLW), was extraordinary for an inland site. Large white-headed gulls were decidedly scarce; the season's best sightings, both at Winthrop Harbor, IL, included an ad. California Gull 28 Nov (ph. RHu) and 2 Iceland Gulls 20 Nov (RHu). Black-legged Kittiwakes were more prevalent than normal, with five reports in each state. Surprisingly, the entire season's Sabine's Gull list occurred at inland sites, with 8 in Illinois and one in Indiana.

A below-par Common Tern flight was reported, but 68 Caspians at L. Cal. 8 Aug (WJM) provided a good count. Noteworthy elsewhere were a tardy Forster's Tern at L. Lemon, IN 7 Nov (JHv, SHv) and 4 Least Terns in Jackson, IL 29 Jul (KAM). An intrepid Black Skimmer (presumably a single bird) executed a scenic tour of the Region. It was first reported in Madison, IL 25 Sep (ph. FHo), where it provided a 3rd state record. The next occurrence was 29 Sep, when it was briefly seen off Mill. B. (BJG), providing Indiana's 3rd record. Presumably the same individual was discovered 10 Oct perched on a Wolf Lake sandbar in Hammond, IN, where it remained through 12 Oct and was seen by scores of observers (JZ, BJG, †KJB, ph. JMc, ph., †m.ob.). On 16 Oct, this wanderer reappeared some 250 km farther s. at Morse Res., Hamilton, IN, where it favored a

small island (KW, ph. †DG, m.ob.). This bird, or birds, could have been a result of the tropical cyclones that made landfall in the Southeast this season. Illinois's 3rd Ancient Murrelet at Carl. L. 6 Nov (ph. DMK, ph. TAM, m.ob.) was a true highlight of the late fall.

DOVES THROUGH THRUSHES

Several correspondents reported excellent Mourning Dove numbers, as exemplified by counts of 700 in *St. Clair*, IL 2 Nov (KAM) and 310 in *Greene*, IN 29 Aug (LWS). The Region's first **Inca Dove**, found at a private residence in Carbondale, IL 23 Sep, remained through the period's end (CH, DMK, KAM, m.ob.). The Chicago area's Monk Parakeet population is flourishing, as evidenced by counts of 100 in Jackson Park 28 Aug (KC) and 86 in Burnham 21 Nov (WJM). A peak tally of 10 Yellow-billed

Cuckoos in Adams, IL 6 Aug (AD) reflected the continuing abundance of this species this year. A count of 14 Great Horned Owls in the sw. Indiana strip mines 5 Aug (LWS) suggests that this species is beginning to rebound from the effects of West Nile virus. This season's Snowy Owl distribution was quite unusual. Only one bird appeared on the lakefront, where most have occurred in the past; it was seen at Calumet Park, IL 27 Nov (IIM). The only others appeared in downstate Indiana, where an injured female was recovered in Decatur 15 Nov (fide ISC) and another was seen in Gibson 18 & 21 Nov (CEM). Short-eared Owls peaked 13 Nov. when 15 were counted in Perry, IL (TAM, DMK). Another successful banding season in Brown, IN resulted in the banding of 56 Northern Saw-whet Owls (RBt). The largest Common Nighthawk tally of 310+ occurred at Des Plaines, IL 22 Aug (AA). Three Chuck-will'swidows lingered in Monroe un-

til 25 Aug (LWS), providing Indiana's first Aug record. A late Ruby-throated Humming-bird nesting in *Hendricks*, IN fledged 2 young 1 Sep (Judith Hansen et al.). Rufous Hummingbirds were again plentiful in the Region, with 6 in Indiana and 2 in Illinois. A nice count of 58 migrating Red-headed Woodpeckers was recorded during a 17 Sep *Monroe*, IN hawkwatch (LWS, MC).

A very early Olive-sided Flycatcher arrived in *Lawrence*, IN 5 Aug (LWS). At the opposite extreme, late flycatcher reports included an Eastern Wood-Pewee in *Edwards*, IL 30 Oct (EWW), a record-late Yellow-bellied Flycatcher in Jackson Park 21–23 Nov (PRC, DFS et al.), and a profoundly tardy Eastern Kingbird at Mill. B. 27 Nov (JJM, SRB, RJP, †KJB et al.), Indiana's first Nov record. Winner of the most colorful fall flycatcher award was a male Vermilion Flycatcher in *DeKalb*, IL 17–30 Oct (18 HR,

SA Red-breasted Nuthatches irrupted this fall, from mid-Sep through the end of the period: 23 along the Indiana lake-front 19 Sep (BJG) and 20 in Sand Ridge State Forest 29 Nov (KAM) were undeniable signs of the protracted flight. Over at least the past three decades, winter irruptive species have appeared in substantial numbers *only* in odd-numbered years. Although virtually all irruptive species have demonstrated this alternate-year pattern, it has been most pronounced in Red-breasted Nuthatch. Clearly, large nuthatch incursions have failed to occur in a few odd-numbered years, but substantial numbers *never* appeared on intervening even-numbered years—without exception. Indeed, using Indiana data, the average of odd-year fall nuthatch totals since 1974 is 109 vs. an average of 28 in even-numbered autumn flights. In fall 2004, however, this pattern was broken, as more than 171 Red-breasted Nuthatches, along with numerous Pine Siskins, a smattering of Common Redpolls, and widespread Red Crossbills swept into the Region.

LILLINGIS & INDIANA



These juvenile Black-necked Stilts at Goose Pond, Greene County, Indiana 13 August 2004 were very likely indicative of local breeding. Photograph by Lee W. Sterrenburg.

DJS, CF, KAM, ph. TAM, m.ob.). A Say's Phoebe was also in *DeKalb*, IL 24 Oct (ph. TR, *fide* DMK). Following a ten-year hiatus of Indiana Scissor-tailed Flycatcher reports, 3 appeared in 2004, one in spring, the fall birds being found along the *Clinton/Tippecanoe* line 11–12 Sep (ph. KA, ph., m.ob.) and in *Dubois* 29–31 Oct (TS, ph. SHv et al.). A fine tally of 10 Bell's Vireos was recorded at a *Sullivan*, IN reclaimed mine 29 Aug (LWS), and another lingered in *Adams*, IL until 24

Sep (AD). An unusually large autumn count of 8 Philadelphia Vireos was logged in *Cook*, IL 26 Sep (DFS).

Purple Martin numbers continue to dwindle. This fall's peak count was 500 at L. Springfield, IL 24 Jul (DFS, KAM, HDB, CT); the maximum Indiana tally was only 75. Peak counts of other swallows included 2050 Trees at Carl. L. 4 Oct (KAM), 3800 Banks at Hennepin L., IL 29 Jul (DFS), and 1000 Barns at Carl. L. 16 Sep (CLW). A strong Winter Wren flight was highlighted by peak tallies of 16 at the Hammond Sanctuary, IN 10 Oct (JZ)

and 13 at Chicago's Rainbow Beach 15 Oct (DFS). The season's only Townsend's Solitaire was reported at I.B.S.P. 6 Nov (DTW, AFS et al.). Other than a poor Wood Thrush flight in s. Illinois (fide KAM), thrushes appear to have returned to normal numbers. Indiana's first-ever Nov Varied Thrush spent 24 Nov in Jim Haw's (†) Ft. Wayne backyard.

WAXWINGS THROUGH FINCHES

Illinois's first autumn-period **Bohemian Waxwing** in a decade appeared at Clinton L., IL 20–29 Nov (ph. EWW, m.ob.). American



This resting Sanderling, an uncommon migrant in the Illinois & Indiana Region away from Lake Michigan, was captured on film 1 September 2004 at Waukegan, Lake County, Illinois. Photograph by Travis A. Mahan.

Pipits peaked in McHenry, IL, when 125+ were recorded 9 Oct (EWW). A strong Golden-winged Warbler flight was highlighted by a count of 11 at Allerton, IL 4 Sep (CLW). An outrageously early and well-described Orange-crowned Warbler at the Montrose Beach "Magic Hedge" 28 Aug (†GAW) contributed to the slowly accumulating evidence that a few individuals of this species migrate quite early. An exceptionally late first-year female Yellow Warbler appeared at Chicago's Grant Park 19 Oct (DFS). One of the season's best finds was Indiana's 2nd (but first confirmed) Black-throated Gray Warbler, dis-



Red Knot and Western Sandpiper are rare transients in the center of the continent. A juvenile of the former was photographed at Waukegan, Lake County, Illinois 1 September 2004 (left), while and a juvenile of the latter was at Chautaugua National Wildlife Refuge, Mason County, Illinois 15 August (right). Photographs by Travis A. Mahan.

covered at a private Fort Wayne residence 31 Aug. The bird remained in this area and was seen sporadically through 29 Sep (ph., †SHo, †Haw, FHe, SSc, MW). Conspicuous by their absence were zero Bay-breasted Warblers at Fox Island Park, Fort Wayne, IN, where an average of 30 has appeared annually over the past 20 years (Haw). Other noteworthy warbler reports included a Yellow Palm Warbler at Fort Harrison Park, IN 31 Oct (†DG), a very tardy Blackpoll in downtown Indianapolis 20 Oct (RLH et al.), and a late Cerulean at Montrose Harbor 27 Sep (DTW). A count of 17 Blue Grosbeaks in Greene and Sullivan, IN 29 Aug (LWS) suggests that this species is flourishing in sw. Indiana.

The only Spotted Towhee reported was a female at Nelson L., IL 17 Oct (RA, ES, m.ob.). The Clay-colored Sparrow flight was poor in Illinois (fide DFS), but up to 2 were found 13-20 Oct in downtown Indianapolis (ph. RLH, MRB et al.), where they are casual. A Lark Bunting frequented the West Aurora Forest Preserve, Kane, IL 13 Nov-18 Dec (SC, AFS, AH, m.ob.). A Le Conte's Sparrow 21 Oct and 3 Nelson's Sharp-taileds 27 Sep in a Boone, IN wetland (RLH) were unexpected there. An unusually late Lincoln's Sparrow was found at Cowles Bog, IN 6 Nov (RJP). A very early Lapland Longspur arrived at Montrose Harbor 19 Sep (GAW, R&KF) and 2 Snow Buntings reached L. Monroe, IN by 9 Nov (MC). On 29 Aug, a nice Bobolink movement produced 140 in Greene, IN (LWS) and 65 at Chau. (CLW). Illinois has fewer than five Great-tailed Grackle records; the female found 7 Aug at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (†CLW, SHa) was thus quite noteworthy. Migrant Orchard Orioles are rarely seen in fall; a female at Chicago's Grant Park 7 Sep (DFS) was unusual.

The fall finch flight was outstanding. Peak counts, among numerous reports, included 27 Purple Finches at Busey Woods, IL 18 Oct (CLW), 48 Red Crossbills at Sand Ridge S.F. 18 Nov (KAM, KR, AFS, ASg, MM), 17 Common Redpolls at Klehm Arboretum 21 Nov (DTW), and 54 Pine Siskins at Clinton L., IL 29 Nov (KAM). Also reported was a Whitewinged Crossbill in Morton Arboretum 21 Nov (DFS) and single Evening Grosbeaks at Jasper-Pulaski W.M.A. 7 Nov (GR), at Sand Ridge S.F. 9 Nov (KR), and in Kane, IL 28 Nov (ES). The grosbeaks constitute the Region's first records in more than a five years.

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Birders in the Illinois & Indiana Region found this Black Skimmer at four different locations 25 September—16 October 2004 (here at Morse Reservoir, Hamilton, Indiana 16 October). Its appearance could have been linked to Hurricane *Ivan's* landfall in Alabama/Florida a week before it was discovered, but recent inland reports of the species have not always been associable with tropical storms. *Photograph by Don Gorney.*

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This Black-throated Gray Warbler, which provided Indiana's second record, frequented a private Fort Wayne residence 31 August—29 September 2004 (here 2 September). Photograph by Steve Hossler.