

Illinois & Indiana



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The spring season produced a roller coaster of weather activity, with strong storms in late March and early April that resulted in an influx of early arrivals for a number of species. For all three months of the period, temperatures were higher than normal. This was particularly evident in April, when temperatures averaged 5–6° F above normal throughout the Region, resulting in an early leaf-out and giving the impression of late arrival times for many groups of birds. Actual arrival dates, however, proved to be about normal. Precipitation throughout the period was close to average, though slightly above average in May in the northern portion of the Region. This resulted in high water levels in northwestern Indiana and a lack of suitable shorebird habitat. There was an assortment of good finds throughout the Region, including Black-bellied and Fulvous Whistling-Ducks, Tricolored Heron, White Ibis, several Black Rails, a Purple Gallinule, Kirtland's Warbler, and MacGillivray's Warbler.

Abbreviations: Bev. Sh. (Beverly Shores, Porter, IN); Carl. L. (Carlyle L., s. IL); Chau. (Chautauqua N.W.R., IL); Dunes (Dunes S.P., Porter, IN); F.P. (Forest Preserve); F.W.A. (Fish & Wildlife Area); Goose Pond (Goose Pond F.W.A., Greene, IN); Hawthorn (Hawthorn Mines, Greene & Sullivan, IN); Hennepin (Hennepin-Hopper Lake Restoration Area, Putnam, IL); Jax. P. (Jackson Park, Chicago); L. Cal. (L. Calumet, Chicago); Miller (Miller Beach, Lake, IN); Montrose (Montrose Pt., Lincoln Park, Chicago).

WATERFOWL THROUGH GROUSE

A Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, representing the 3rd record for Indiana, was present at an industrial site in Tippecanoe 20 Apr–1 May (p.a., ph. JC, ScS, *fide* JBD), photographed

and identified by plant workers. A Fulvous Whistling-Duck, only Illinois's 5th since 1933, was in Lake 3 Apr (ph. SM). Geese moved out rather quickly this spring, but 4700 Greater White-fronted Geese 4 Mar at Hennepin (DFS) and a spring record total of 1473 Greater White-fronted Geese reported in Indiana exemplified the increase of that species in the Region. A single Greater White-fronted Goose 28 May in Stephenson, IL (EWW) was tardy. An astounding 120 Ross's Geese were at Kankakee F.W.A. 7 Mar (RHu, JK); prior to this year, Indiana's highest count of Ross's Goose was 8. An exceptional total of 60 Mute Swans was noted 25 May in Tazewell, IL (KAM). Two Trumpeter Swans observed at a nest 29 May in Carroll, IL (EWW) were significant, as this may be the first known nesting of the species in the Region since the late nineteenth century.

American Black Duck numbers were down in the Region, while counts of 2000 Blue-winged Teal at Carl. L. 13 Apr (DMK) and of 10,000 Northern Shovelers, 4000 Northern Pintails, and 6000 Green-winged Teal at Santa Fe Bottoms 26 Mar (DMK) represented high counts. The shoveler total was the 2nd highest for Illinois, exclusive of aerial survey data. Cinnamon Teal made a splash in the Region: a pair 8–20 Apr at Eagle Park Marsh, Madison, IL was seen by many (P&BJ, ph. FRH, ph. KAM, m.ob.), and Indiana's 14th, in LaPorte 1–24 Apr (KM, m.ob.), also proved cooperative. A Canvasback 26 May in Lake, IL (JS) was late to depart the Region, as was a Redhead seen 28 May at Horseshoe L., Madison, IL (FRH). A fine count of 1700 Redheads was made at Brookville Res. 11 Mar (WRB), and 2265 Ring-necked Ducks were tallied in w.-cen. Indiana 16 Mar (LWS). Greater Scaup, which continue to be scarce in spring in Illinois, moved into inland locations in Indiana in unprecedented numbers, as the inland total of 1688 birds was 10 times the 20-year mean. The maximum tally of 924 at Brookville Res. 5 Mar (JyS, JB, JS) overshadowed the previous inland high of 189. Scoters were typically scarce, with 11 Surf and 6 White-winged noted throughout the Region. Two female Black Scoters, the rarest scoter inland, were discovered on L. Lemon 18 Mar (DRW), and one lingered through 22 Mar. No Long-tailed Ducks were seen along the lakefront, though a fine inland count in Indiana included 4 different singles. There was only one report of Ruffed Grouse, that of 2 in Washington, IN 19 Apr (RLH). This species has become increasingly scarce over the past five years. Illinois's Greater Prairie-Chicken population was notably lower than last year's (JWW), with just an estimated 49 males at Prairie Ridge, Marion (SAS).

LOONS THROUGH HERONS

Red-throated Loons were reported only on L. Michigan, where at Bev. Sh. a phenomenal 26 were logged 4 Mar (BJG); the Region's previous one-day high count was 14. Common Loons appeared in lower-than-average numbers in Indiana, though in Illinois a count of 135 along L. Michigan at Wilmette 8 Apr (RDH) provided the highest spring total in 13 years. The 203 Pied-billed Grebes along a census route at Chau. 21 Apr (R&SB) provided Illinois's 2nd best spring total in at least 14 years. The Horned Grebe passage was weak, and the only Red-necked Grebe for the season was a bird in alternate plumage found at Potato Creek S.P. 18 May (RHu). Eared Grebes made a typical showing, with 7 noted, all in Illinois. American White Pelicans maintained a strong presence in the Region: 3000 were along the Mississippi R. in Whiteside, IL 18 Mar (DJS). Double-crested Cormorant numbers were down from the last few years.

Hérons appeared in good diversity and numbers throughout the Region this season. A fine total of 75 American Bitterns was reported, led by counts of 6 at Oakwood Bottoms, Jackson, IL 29 Apr (IAM, SDB, CAT) and 5 at TNC Kankakee Sands, Newton, IN 9 May (JBH). The 40 Least Bitterns reported throughout the Region was also an excellent total. The 176 Great Egrets at the Baker's Lake colony in nw. Cook, IL 6 May (GAW) provided the highest spring total in six years, while 78 Snowy Egrets at Horseshoe L., Madison 30 Apr (FRH) represented a record-high spring count. It was a good spring for Little Blue Herons in Indiana, as 16 were reported, the peak count being 6 at Goose Pond F.W.A. 30 May (LP). Indiana's 15th Tricolored Heron appeared in the company of 3 Cattle Egrets in s. Vigo 22 Apr (AWB, EM, SK). An exceptional count of 200 Cattle Egrets was made in St. Clair, IL 15 Apr (DMK). The Cattle Egret observed 18 Mar in Whiteside (DJS) was 10 days ahead of the average Illinois arrival date, which is especially notable given the northerly locale. A Green Heron seen 2–3 Apr in Jax. P. (MGG, BRK) was also ahead of schedule, providing a record early date for that site. Following last year's drought-induced nesting failure, Black-crowned Night-Heron numbers were considerably reduced at the L. Cal. breeding colony, with only 288 counted there 6 May (WJM). However, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron numbers were encouraging, with 16 in Madison, IL 24 Apr (FRH) setting a record-high spring count.

An ad. White Ibis observed 22 Apr–4 May at Rend L. (DMK, ph. LH et al.) provided only the 6th spring Illinois record and just the 4th verified record of an ad. bird. Two Glossy Ibis

were in St. Clair, IL 6 May (ph. SC), and at least 3 of 4 *Plegadis* observed 10–15 May at Chau. (R&SB, ph. TED) were positively identified as White-faced. Indiana's 7th White-faced Ibis, and earliest ever, was found at Cane Ridge W.M.A. 28 Apr (G&LB) and seen again 2 May (LP). A *Plegadis* ibis was seen as a flyby at Goose Pond 30 May (LWS, DW, PS), and another was noted 16–17 May in St. Clair, IL (FRH, DMK, KAM). A Black Vulture observed 23 Apr in Perry, IL (VMK), n. of traditional breeding locations, provided another example of this species' continuing northward push.

HAWKS THROUGH CRANES

An Osprey seen 18 Mar at Shabbona Lake S.P. (DJS) tied both the record early arrival date for n. Illinois and the 3rd earliest date for the state overall. The spring hawk flight at Dunes was rather poor for the 2nd straight year. Broad-winged Hawk numbers were down this year throughout the Region; the peak tally consisted of 16 at L. Lemon 23 Apr (J&SH). A rare dark-morph Broad-winged was seen 23 Apr at Glacial Park, McHenry, IL (ph. MF), and a light-morph Swainson's Hawk was seen at Dunes 11 Apr (BJG). The Region enjoyed an exceptional total of Golden Eagles, with 17 reported. There was also a strong flight of Merlins, with 18 tallied in Indiana, the daily maximum consisting of 5 birds at Dunes 13 Apr (BJG). A Crested Caracara was quite a surprise 15 Apr in Kankakee, IL (p.a., †JBH, BR). The identification of this bird was clear, but the issue of its provenance, and whether this species has begun to show a pattern of vagrancy, remains a topic of discussion.

Rails were very evident throughout the Region this spring. An excellent total of 11+ Yellow Rails was reported, all but one from Illinois, including a record-early sighting 22 Mar in Marion (TE, SAS) and an astonishing 5 at Carl. L. 17 Apr (ph. TAM, SDB). Amazingly, 3 different Black Rails, representing Indiana's 3rd and 4th spring records in the past 25 years (p.a.), and Illinois's 6th in the past 10 years (p.a.), were documented. Unfortunately, the first Indiana bird was found dead in a parking lot in Carmel, Hamilton 5 May (JCr); the others were at Carl. L. 17 Apr (DMK, KAM) and at Hawthorn 13 May (SJ). It was a phenomenal spring for King Rails, as at least 35 different birds were recorded, including an impressive 6 at Illinois Beach S.P. 6 May (JS). In Indiana, the high count consisted of 4 at Goose Pond 3 Mar (LWS, J&SH, MC), birds that might have wintered there. Virginia Rails were fairly common, including an early bird at Prairie Ridge S.N.A. 26 Mar (CLH) and a high of 15 at Carl. L. 20–21 Apr (SDB, PSW).

An elusive Purple Gallinule, Indiana's 15th, was discovered at Salamonie Res. 8 May (JAH). The 47 Common Moorhens reported throughout the Region represented an excellent total. Nice aggregations of Sandhill Cranes included 4700 reported 23 Mar in Cook, IL (WSS) and 3500 at Goose Pond 3 Mar (LWS, J&SH, MC). Three Whooping Cranes from the introduced Wisconsin migratory flock were seen at Goose Pond 7–10 Mar (LP, G&LB, DRW).

SHOREBIRDS THROUGH TERNS

Seven Piping Plovers were reported throughout the Region, all but one from Illinois. Two were seen 6 May at Carl. L. (ph. KAM, RH, DWs, DMK). Black-necked Stilts continue to increase in the Region. Indiana's 2nd earliest appeared in n. Posey 8 Apr (JyB), and a pair in Clay 13 Apr (RES, CLH) provided the 3rd earliest arrival date for Illinois. A stilt in Stephenson, IL 27–30 May (DFS, m.ob.) was unusually far north. This was the 3rd straight spring in Illinois with double-digit numbers (20) of stilts, and two double-digit



Sue Murray found and photographed this Fulvous Whistling-Duck at Independence Grove Forest Preserve in Lake County, Illinois 3 April 2006; there are only five prior accepted state records since 1933. Photograph by Sue Murray.

counts in Indiana included 16 at Cane Ridge W.M.A. 2 May (G&LB) and 11 at Goose Pond 30 May (LP). Prior to 2006, the Indiana state maximum count was 5. American Avocets were scarce, with just 3 reported, all from Illinois.

Willetts staged an unprecedented movement through the Region at the end of Apr, as 61 Willetts were noted at three sites in Indiana and 67 were noted between Waukegan and Illinois Beach S.P. (EWW) 29 Apr. On 30 Apr, the 82 seen in Clinton, IL (DMK) and the 112 at Montrose 1 May (GAW et al.) set new record high counts. Of the 17 Whimbrels recorded in the Region this spring, a group of 8 seen flying over Wolf L. 19 May (JK, CAM) matched Indiana's all-time high spring count for the lakefront. Hudsonian Godwits staged a good movement, with 17 reported, all in Illinois; 7 at Rend L. 19 May (RH) provided the peak tally. The sole Marbled Godwit was observed 18 May in St. Clair, IL (TJD). Pectoral

Sandpipers peaked with a nice count of 5000 in Fayette, IL 9 Apr (DMK). A Dunlin at L. Decatur 18 Mar (TAM) was record early by three days for Illinois. A Long-billed Dowitcher seen 23 Mar at Cypress Creek N.W.R., Pulaski, IL also was rather early (KAM). Three Red-necked Phalaropes were seen 12–13 May in Ford (SR et al.), and one was at Cane Ridge W.M.A., Gibson, IN 14 May (KZ B&KA).

Lakefront gull numbers continue to plummet: all species except Great Black-backed were reported in numbers below their averages. Five Laughing Gulls were seen, and the apparent Laughing Gull × Ring-billed Gull hybrid returned 1 Apr–21 May to a se. Chicago Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant for the 3rd consecutive year (†WJM, ph. JG). An ad California Gull seen 19 Mar at L. Cal. (ph. RDH) was a highlight, as were 7000 Bonaparte's Gulls seen 3 Apr at Rend L. (KAM). A late ad. Thayer's Gull was noted 13 May in Waukegan, IL (RDH), and a single worn second-year Glaucous Gull was seen at Miller 17 May (JJM, JKC, LSH, KJB). The maximum count of Great Black-backed Gulls was of 9 birds at various lakefront sites 4 Mar (JKC SRB, SN, RJP). Both Caspian and Common Terns were reported in low numbers, though single Caspian Terns 27 Mar at Wolf L. (CAM) and 28 Mar at Jax. P. (KMC) provided the earliest and 2nd earliest Illinois arrival dates. Contrastingly, a large total of 264 Forster's Terns was noted 5 May at Waukegan IL (JS).

DOVES THROUGH WOODPECKERS

Eurasian Collared-Doves were again reported widely throughout the Region. The White-winged Dove invasion in Indiana continued this spring, with an astounding 6 birds reported, including 2 in New Albany 15 Apr (GD), one in Chesterton 16 Apr (KJB), 2 at Dunes 23 Apr (BJG), and one at TNC Kankakee Sands 31 May (JK). Monk Parakeets were again seen constructing nests in Highland, IN on both 3 & 19 May (RLH, CH, LAC).

Three Barn Owls were reported throughout the Region. The last Snowy Owl observation this spring was 2 Apr in LaSalle, IL (DJS). The Burrowing Owl first noted last Aug in Pyramid S.P., Perry, IL was still present 25 Mar (ph. JPU, JWE, JM). A Common Nighthawk 13 Apr at Carl. L. (DMK) provided Illinois's earliest arrival date, but numbers generally were discouragingly low. At least 8 Chuck-will's-widows were reported from four different locations in Indiana this spring. Indiana's first Mar Ruby-throated Hummingbird appeared on the 30th in Vanderburgh (fide SS). The female Rufous Hummingbird that win-

tered at a Poseyville feeder lingered until 15 Apr (*vide* DG), providing Indiana's first spring record.

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WAXWINGS

Counts of Yellow-bellied and Least Flycatchers were down. A record-high 46 Willow Flycatchers in Indiana was made at Bev. Sh., Kankakee F.W.A., and Michigan City 26 May (JKC, LSH, KJB). Six Western Kingbird reports included three each from s. and ne. Illinois. Indiana's 9th spring Scissor-tailed Flycatcher was found in *Parke* 17-18 May (PPS, AWB), and one was in *Lee*, IL 2-3 May (JEH).

Among the 15 Loggerhead Shrikes reported from Illinois was one 6-31 May+ at the n. location of *Winnebago* (DTW), where a pair nested last year. Seven Northern Shrikes were recorded, primarily in the n. tier of counties, the latest being a bird in *LaPorte*, IN 2 Apr (RHu). An excellent total of 72 Bell's Vireos was tallied throughout Indiana; 2 in *Adams*, IL 21 Apr (AGD) provided a record-early arrival date. Other early vireos included a Blue-headed at Lincoln Park, Chicago 19 Apr (GAW) and a Warbling at Mermet L., *Massac*, IL 7 Apr (KAM). Yellow-throated Vireo numbers were also up, but the most intriguing vireo of the season was a silent bird 6 May at Carl L. fitting the description of a *Cassin's Vireo* (p.a., †DMK). There are no accepted records of this species for the Region.

All of the swallows exhibited strong spring flights, exemplified by 5000 Tree Swallows at Rend L. 3 Apr (KAM) and 696 Barns 11 May in *Lake*, IL (JS). Carolina Wrens appear to be doing well in the Region, as 182 birds were reported in Indiana. A Winter Wren lingered until 22 May in *Lake*, IL (DRD). Indiana's earliest spring record for Marsh Wren consisted of 2 at Goose Pond 4 Mar (ph. JWL). Rare at the Indiana lakefront, 2 Northern Mockingbirds were reported. The American Pipit migration was very strong, as 800 were seen at Santa Fe Bottoms 11 Mar (DMK), an all-time high for Illinois. A fine longshore count of 2545 Cedar Waxwings was made from Dunes 24 May (KJB).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

In general, warbler migration started early but was squelched by several weeks of northerly winds in May. A Northern Parula 17 Mar in *Massac* (FKB) was record early by seven days. Other notable early warbler arrivals included a Magnolia at Ft. Massac S.P. 22 Apr (KAM); a Black-throated Blue in Jax. P. 29 Apr (ph. MGG); and a Worm-eating in *Union*, IL 7 Apr (KAM). A highlight of the warbler migration was a male *Kirtland's Warbler* in Wilmette, IL 23 May (ph. HS). Lower-than-normal num-

bers of Palm Warblers were noted throughout the Region. A Prothonotary Warbler 6 Apr at Mermet L. (FKB) was early; a tally of 29 was made at Kankakee F.W.A. 26 May (KJB, LSH, JKC). Another exciting find was a male *MacGillivray's Warbler* reported at Hampshire F.P., *Kane*, IL 21-22 May (p.a., †SAC, JJD). A count of 21 Hooded Warblers in *Union*, IL 6 May (SDB) was notable.

A single Spotted Towhee was reported from 20 Apr into May at Binnie F.P., *Kane*, IL (KML, AF, JJD). An excellent count of 250 American Tree Sparrows was made in *Newton*, IN 6 Mar (JBH). In Indiana, 4 Clay-colored Sparrows were totaled, from three locations. The 2nd record of Lark Sparrow in *Allen*, IN 15 May (JAH) was part of a fine total count of 34 in the state. A Henslow's Sparrow 1 Apr in Chicago was early (SJH). Two Le Conte's Sparrows were reported in Indiana, one at West Beach 14 Apr (JKC, JJM, KJB), the other at the Prairie Chicken Refuge, *Newton* 8 May (CF). Only 3 Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows were reported, the latest at Whiting Park, *Lake*, IN 27 May (KJB, JKC, LSH, EMH). Two Harris's Sparrows were in Illinois, and White-crowned Sparrows staged a strong flight in Indiana, with 634 birds reported. The longspur flight throughout the Region was lackluster, and there were only two reports of Snow Buntings, both singles. An ad. male Painted Bunting at a Charleston, IL feeder 17 Apr (ph. D&FR) furnished a record-early arrival date for Illinois; a second-year male was also noted 28-29 May at the now traditional E. St. Louis site (DMK, KAM).

Yellow-headed Blackbirds seem to be doing well, with a maximum count of 35 at Spring L., *Carroll*, IL (DTW). Singles in Indiana were found at Wakarusa Wastewater Treatment Facility, *Elkhart* 5 May (DS) and at Big Pine Creek, *Benton* 18 May (JCL, JK). Notable was an ad. male Brewer's Blackbird at a feeder in Bloomington, IN 23 Mar (DRW), while a flock of 6000 at Carl L. 11 Mar established a new record for Illinois (DMK). A male Great-tailed Grackle made a one-day appearance at Spring L., *Carroll* 13 May (p.a., †DTW). This species has been reported in Illinois with greater frequency since 2003, with only two accepted records prior to that year. Baltimore Orioles were well represented this spring, the flight highlighted by a count of 122 at Dunes 3 May (KJB, JKC, PBG, RJP). The exceptional record in a dismal season for winter finches was a spectacular tally of 185 Purple Finches at Dunes 16 Apr (BJG), which easily eclipsed the previous maximum count of 100 recorded in 1931. Only 17 Pine Siskins were reported throughout the Region.

Undocumented reports: A White-winged Dove was reported at a feeder in *LaSalle*, IL 23 May (JEH). There are 10 accepted records of this species for Illinois, all in six of the previous seven springs. A reported Great Crested Flycatcher 31 Mar in *Lake*, IL (JGr) would be record early by 10 days.

Corrigendum: A Fork-tailed Flycatcher in Illinois (16 May 2005) was an ad., not an imm., as reported (N.A.B. 59: 436).

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