

Michigan noted excellent Dickcissel numbers, while Minnesota's were under par. A Rusty Blackbird 19 Jun in *Lake* represented Minnesota's first summer record in 5 years. Good numbers of Orchard Orioles were found in Wisconsin and Minnesota, where Boevers counted 20+ on 18 Jul in *Traverse*. Red Crossbills were found in several Wisconsin and Minnesota counties. The **Eurasian Tree Sparrow** present last summer at a feeder in *Clay*, MN, lingered from the spring season into early June.

#### CORRIGENDA

In *North American Birds* 53(1): 18, the 30,000–40,000 Long-tailed Ducks that concentrated just prior to the "Great November Storm" were seen at Point Beach S.F., just n. of Two Rivers, *Wisconsin*, not Iowa.

In the same issue, a Brambling ascribed to Michigan in the text on p. 57 was indeed seen at Hoyt Lakes, *Minnesota*, as was stated in the regional report introduction.

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With the exception of a single immature present at Indiana Dunes in October 1998, these three immature Wood Storks at the Universal Reclaimed Mine Area in Vermillion County 24 July were the first reported in Indiana for more than half a century. Photograph/Alan Bruner

#### KENNETH J. BROCK

June weather was fairly normal for a Midwestern summer, but July was unusually hot and dry, bringing local drought conditions. One significant impact of July's heat was decreased observer effort, resulting in less coverage than normal. As Jim Wilson wryly noted, temperatures exceeding 100°F reduce birder enthusiasm. The impact of these weather conditions on birds is more difficult to assess. One obvious effect was the altering of wetland habitat. Many areas experienced lowered water levels, which often rendered them more "user friendly" to migrant shorebirds. The Lake Michigan water level was also quite low, producing a much wider than normal expanse of beach. Perhaps this provides a partial explanation for the increase in the number of large shorebirds observed at the southern end of the lake.

This summer two endangered species experienced an above-average breeding season: Piping Plover and Least Tern. It was also a banner breeding season for the prairie species, especially those located in the Mississippi River states. Sedge Wrens, Henslow's Sparrows, Dickcissels, and Boblinks all fared quite well. The season's rarities included Brown Pelican, Wood Stork, Band-tailed Pigeon, and a Tropical/Couch's Kingbird.

The Kentucky summary failed to arrive in time for inclusion in this report; howev-



er, Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr. e-mailed a few summer highlights for that state.

**Abbreviations:** H.B.S.P. (*Headlands Beach S.P., OH*); L.Cal. (*L. Calumet, Chicago*); R.E.D.A. (*Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area, St. Charles, MO*); S.C.R. (*Squaw Creek Nat'l Wildlife Ref., MO*); Spfld. (*Springfield, IL*).

#### LOONS THROUGH STORKS

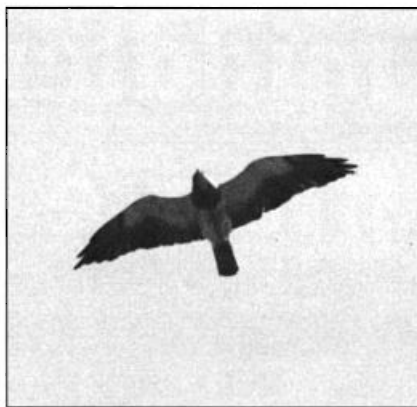
Despite a general scarcity of loons this summer, a Red-throated Loon at Spirit L. 28 Jun (†LSc) provided Iowa's first summer record. Ample Pied-billed Grebe reports from Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri suggest that this species enjoyed another productive nesting season. Rarely reported in summer, the Red-necked Grebe at Colo Ponds, IA, 3 Jun (PA, RA) was noteworthy. Two W. Grebes were reported in Iowa, where this species is uncommon in summer, but a bird from R.E.D.A. 4 Jun and 5 Jul (PW, CM) provid-

ed one of few summer records for Missouri.

Summer Am. White Pelicans were widespread, stimulating speculation that this may soon become a breeding species. Two White Pelicans wandered E to Ottawa N.W.R., OH, where they lingered from 7 Jul through at least 31 Jul (TKp, m.ob.). More astonishing was a single **Brown Pelican** seen at Michigan City Harbor 7 & 13 Jul (†JMc et al., BG); this is only the 3rd record for n.w. Indiana. Double-crested Cormorant colonies were reported in Illinois, Iowa, and Ohio; a single nest was constructed in Gibson, IN, where an incubating bird was observed 27 Jul (JCs). This represents Indiana's first nesting since the 1950s. Once again S.C.R. was the Region's stronghold for breeding Least Bitterns; on a 2–8 Jun survey, 50 nests were found (JHi). Breeding was also confirmed in 9 other Missouri marshes. Summer reports suggest that both Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets are faring well across the Region. In Illinois, Little Blue Herons expanded their nesting activities northward by constructing 2 nests at L.Cal. 30 Jun–25 Jul (WM); this provided a first breeding record for n.e. Illinois. Excellent Cattle Egret numbers were recorded at L. Barkley, KY, where 300+ nesting pairs were observed 10 Jun; more than 100 Black-crowned Night-Heron nests were also present (BPB). Some 300 Cattle Egrets, along with scores of Little Blues and 50–100 Black-crowned Night-Herons, also nested near Cottonwood Pt., Pemiscot, MO (JW). A count of 30 Green Herons at Miami-Whitewater, OH, Jul 31 (DBr) constituted a fine summer tally. Within 8 months of Indiana's first **Wood Stork** record in 54 years, three juveniles were found 24 Jul (ph. AB) w. of Universal; they remained through the end of the period and were seen by many observers.

#### **WATERFOWL THROUGH CRANES**

A Greater White-fronted Goose at Terra L., IA, 3 & 11 Jul (BEn) provided one of few summer records for the Region. Small numbers of Snow Geese also summered in Iowa and Illinois. Entirely unexpected was an ad. Tundra Swan at Sheldon Marsh W.M.A., Erie, OH, 15–18 Jul (VF, MZ). Typically small numbers of N. Shovelers and N. Pintails nested in n. Iowa. Noteworthy reports of non-breeding ducks included a male Gadwall at Carl L., IL, 19 Jun (DKa), a female N. Shoveler in St. Clair, IL, 4 Jul (DBo), a pair of Green-winged Teal at R.E.D.A. 26 Jun (CM, JMa), a Canvasback at Newton L., IL, 14 Jul (†JWa), a male Greater Scaup in Dickinson, IA, 31 Jul



**This adult Swainson's Hawk, photographed on territory 19 May, remained to breed in northern Kane County, Illinois, where the species has nested for decades. Photograph/ Joe Milosevich**

(†LSc), and female Red-breasted Mergansers at Dallas City, IL, 3 Jun (VK) and L. Barkley, KY, 18 Jul (BPB). Fourteen was a good summer count of Hooded Mergansers at the Colo Ponds, IA, 17 Jun (HZ, JD).

For the 2nd consecutive year Ospreys successfully nested at Bergman's Slough, Cook, IL; this summer's effort produced two fledglings (CT, m.ob.). Bergman's Slough still comprises Illinois' only Osprey nesting site. The only other Osprey nest was on the Ohio R. in Livingston, KY (BPB). The Region's Mississippi Kite population continues to prosper. This summer 22 Kites were counted at Union County W.M.A., IL, 24 Jun (DSt), and at least six, including an incubating bird, were seen at Lincoln S.P., IN (J&SH). In Iowa singletons were observed on several occasions at Des Moines and at Ledges S.P., and in Missouri seven pairs were scattered across the state. Extralimital reports included two imm. birds in Lebanon, IN, 6 Jun (†RH). The status of breeding Bald Eagles was also encouraging, with 47 nests in Missouri and a predicted record nesting season in Iowa. Other breeding raptor reports included nesting N. Harriers in Illinois, Iowa, and Ohio, and an active Sharp-shinned nest in Vermilion, IL. Assessments of breeding Red-shouldered and Cooper's hawk populations were also uniformly positive. Rare throughout the Region in summer, single Merlins in Dickinson, IA, 9 Jul (†DH) and at Killdeer Plains W.M.A., OH (VF), provided the first July records for both states.

Based on studies at spring leks, Missouri authorities estimated that the state's Greater Prairie Chicken population has dwindled to 1000 birds (*vide* JW). Iowa correspondents deemed that N. Bobwhite numbers

were declining, but this species was believed to be increasing in Missouri. It was a good summer for rails, with a pair of Kings and five young reported in e. Perry, IL, 20 Jul (LSt) and 5 broods at Clarence Cannon N.W.R., MO (RC). In addition, a single King Rail was seen in Hancock, IA, 16 Jun (GD). Virginia Rails and Soras were also plentiful, with summer reports from Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa. Following last spring's invasion, Purple Gallinules were found 17 May–22 Jun in Richardson Wildlife Foundation, IL (AR), 1 Jun at Ted Shanks W.M.A., MO (JW), and 27 Jun at R.E.D.A (CM, JMa). In addition, one to two adults were at the traditional Mermet L., IL, breeding site 9–26 Jun (MRe, KMc). Encouragingly, Com. Moorhens were more plentiful this summer, with nesting reported at multiple sites in Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa. Remarkably, summer period Sandhill Cranes were reported in all 5 states, with nesting confirmed in Illinois and Iowa and nesting attempted at Killbuck W.M.A., OH.

#### **SHOREBIRDS**

Early migrant plover reports included a Black-bellied at L.Cal 31 Jul (JL) and an Am. Golden at Lake Chautauqua N.W.R., IL, 18 Jul (RCh). Piping Plover nesting activity at MidAmerican Energy Ponds, IA, was the greatest in several years, with five pairs plus a nest with 4 eggs 9–10 Jun (JD). Migrant Piping Plovers were seen at Miller Beach, IN, 1 & 4 Jul (BG et al.), Paradise ash basin, Muhlenberg, KY, 16 & 18 Jul (DR, BPB), and in Lake, IL, 17 Jul (SH). It was another good season for Black-necked Stilts. The Region's largest concentration occurred in Missouri, where 22 were counted in rice fields s.e. of Dexter in July (SD). Two active nests and four young stilts were observed in E. Cape Girardeau, IL, where the maximum count was 11 birds (RM, FB). In Kentucky at least one Black-necked Stilt pair successfully nested at Open Pond in Fulton (BPB). One to four Am. Avocets were reported in all 3 Great Lakes states. Ignoring their name, an impressive 50 Solitary Sandpipers gathered at Stump L., IL, 24 Jul (KMc). A fine summer Willet movement on L. Michigan was highlighted by 37 at Miller Beach, IN, 27 Jul (BG) and 25 at Michigan City Harbor, IN, 4 Jul (JMc, JSm). The latter site also proved to be a magnet for large shorebirds in July. A flock of nine Whimbrel flew past the harbor 6 Jul (MM), providing Indiana's largest count in 4 decades, and an amazing flock of 12 Marbled Godwits was seen there 4 Jul (JMc, JSm), quadrupling Indiana's previous high

count. Three Ruddy Turnstones at R.E.D.A 23 Jun (EWd) provided a pleasant surprise at this inland location. A Semipalmated Sandpiper at Pigeon River W.M.A., IN, 22 Jun (Haw, SS, FH) and a Least Sandpiper at Sheldon W.M.A., OH, 21 Jun (RHn, SW) were presumed early southbound migrants. The Region's best tally of southbound Pectoral Sandpipers, by a wide margin, was 1200 at Horseshoe L., IL, 27 Jul (DKa). A Buff-breasted Sandpiper at Waukegon, IL, 24 Jul (SH) was a bit early. The only sizable Short-billed Dowitcher concentration numbered 279 at Sheldon W.M.A., OH, 15 Jul (VF). Six nominate *griseus* Short-billeds seen in Schererville, IN, Jul 31 (KB, JcD, JMc, JSm) were unusual so far west. The Region's only Long-billed Dowitcher was an adult at Sheldon W.M.A., OH, 27 Jul (VF). A Com. Snipe at Spring Run W.M.A., IA, 24 Jul (ET) hints at local nesting. One to two Wilson's Phalaropes were reported in all 4 of the n. states. The only Red-necked Phalarope was a singleton at Lake Chautauqua N.W.R., IL, 24–25 Jul (RCh).

## GULLS THROUGH TERNS

Following the pattern of recent years, Laughing Gulls were widespread across the Region. This summer one to four were reported in Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, and Ohio—including an adult that returned to the parking lot of a fast-food restaurant on Chicago's s.e. side for the 3rd consecutive summer (WM, m.ob.). The two Missouri Laughing Gulls were at R.E.D.A. 4 Jul (JMa). Franklin's Gulls were reported only w. of the Mississippi R., where the peak count was 100+ near E. Okoboji, IA, 10 Jul (LS). For the 4th consecutive summer a Black-headed Gull appeared in the Great Lakes region of Iowa. This year's bird, an adult, was found at the dump near E. Okoboji 10 Jul (†LS et al.). A first-summer Little Gull, seen regularly in Lake, IL, 25 Jun–20 Jul (EWl, m.ob.), was unusual for the summer. A 29 May census of the L.Cal. Ring-billed Gull colony yielded 5008 nests with eggs (*vide* WM). In addition, a new colony established at Chicago's Navy Pier had 606 nests, mostly with young, 12 Jun (EWl et al.). Counts of Herring Gull nests yielded 19 with eggs at L.Cal. 29 May (*vide* WM) and 18 e. of Montrose Harbor, Chicago, 12 Jun (EWl, et al.).

Although Caspian Terns were present on L. Michigan throughout the summer, nesting was not confirmed. Peak counts consisted of 43 on the Indiana lakefront 31 Jul (JcD et al.) and 22 at L.Cal. 2 Jun (DSt). The spring period Royal Tern at Michigan

City Harbor, IN, was last reported 7 Jun (RB, JMt). Common Tern nesting was unsuccessful at the Waukegon, IL, colony. Although some 50 birds displayed nesting activity in late June, in mid-July both clutches of eggs and newly hatched chicks were abandoned for unknown reasons (DD). The Region's Least Terns had another good breeding season. In Missouri a survey on 14 Jun revealed 968 nests in 10 colonies along river sandbars (RR). At the Gibson, IN, colony, 31 Least Tern nests and 19 fledglings were reported (*vide* JCs). Fifteen adults were at the MidAmerica Energy Pond colony in Iowa, along with 2 nests (each with 3 eggs) 9–10 Jun; this was the most birds at this site in several years (JD). In Kentucky nesting was attempted at 3 locations (BPB). An extralimital ad. Least Tern appeared at the Miami-Whitewater wetlands, OH, 14 Jun (PW, †NK). Black Terns remained scarce, with only small numbers of migrants reported; nesting was suspected only in Dickinson, IA (JC, LS).

## PIGEONS THROUGH VIREOS

Illinois' 2nd Band-tailed Pigeon visited a feeding station in De Witt 14–17 Jul (†DBi, ph. m.ob.); however, this summer occurrence is inconsistent with the vagrancy pattern of this species, and the record will be subject to approval by the state rare bird committee. The Eur. Collared-Dove invasion continues unabated. Multiple birds were reported in Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri, and two birds in Brook, Newton, were the first Collared-Doves for Indiana (†Haw, ph. m.ob.). The Illinois rare bird committee recently accepted Monk Parakeet as part of the state avifauna; consequently, the 12 active nests reported in Cook were noteworthy.

The only nesting Barn Owls were reported in Iowa, where two nests were confirmed and the presence of a fledgling suggested a 3rd nest. A Burrowing Owl was seen several times in Lyon, IA, near the 1998 nesting site (*vide* DH). An ad. N. Saw-whet Owl found in McLean, IL, 7–24 Jun (†EM, DBi) provided a pleasant summer surprise for c. Illinois birders. Except for Chilicothe, MO, where Com. Nighthawks were deemed numerous (SK), assessments of this species were uniformly negative across the Region. For the first time since 1975, no breeding Chuck-will's-widows were located at Sand Ridge S.F., IL (RBj); Chucks also failed to return to the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, where at least one had been recorded annually since 1980. On a more positive note, 161 Whip-poor-will territo-

**SA** For several years correspondents have lamented the low number of Black-billed Cuckoos in the Region. This concern was amplified during summer 1999 with multiple expressions of alarm. Indeed, some observers complained about being unable to find any Black-billed Cuckoos whatsoever. In n.e. Illinois, Robert Montgomery commented "continued decline should be given a conservation alarm." Stotz also noted "low numbers around Chicago." A quantitative assessment, albeit local in nature, was provided by Rosche's summer census of the huge Ravenna Army Ammunition Plant in Portage, OH. Rosche found ten Black-billeds and 52 Yellow-billed cuckoos. This Yellow-billed to Black-billed ratio of 5.2 is noteworthy, as it is consistent with ratios published in other Middlewestern Prairie Region states: Kent and Dinsmore (1996, *Birds of Iowa*) list a Yellow-billed to Black-billed ratio of six, and Bohlen (1989, *The Birds of Illinois*) quotes a 1963 ratio of 14. Thus, if indeed Black-billeds have declined relative to Yellow-billeds, the decrease is not uniform across the Region. Both species should be monitored carefully.

ries were located in Sand Ridge S.F., IL (RBj). Nesting Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were detected in Winneshiek, IA (*vide* DC), in Lake, OH (TL, JP), and in Cuyahoga, OH, for the first county nesting there since the 1960s (GM, TL).

An Olive-sided Flycatcher at Shimek Forest 15 Jun (MPr) provided a new late spring departure date for Iowa. A count of 48 Acadian Flycatchers at Fox Ridge S.P., IL, 23 Jun (RCh) was impressive. Positive confirmation for nesting Alder Flycatchers in Illinois is lacking; consequently, a bird in Rock Cut S.P., Winnebago, IL, 1 Jul (DW) was most intriguing. Also of great interest was a pair of Least Flycatchers that were observed building a nest, which was subsequently abandoned, in June near Clifton Hill, Randolph, MO (CS). The most remarkable bird of the summer was a **Tropical/Couch's Kingbird** found on Maeystown Rd., Monroe, IL, 3 Jun (†DKa, ph. JMa). This bird, which has not been identified to species, constitutes a first record for the Region. Summer period W. Kingbirds were found in all reporting states except Ohio. Interestingly, the n.w. Indiana bird returned for its 6th consecutive year only to pair with

an E. Kingbird: four hybrid young resulted (Haw, SS, MW). The only Scissor-tailed Flycatchers e. of the Mississippi R. appeared in *Fulton*, KY, where two were seen 4 Jul (JWn), and at *Prairie Du Rocher*, IL, 5 Jul (DKa). Bell's Vireo, a marginal species in Ohio, was reported in June at *Miami-Whitewater wetland* (DSa, m.ob.), *Big Island W.M.A.* (MB, m.ob.), and *Buck Creek S.P.* (DO).

### SWALLOWS THROUGH FINCHES

In Iowa several observers expressed concern over low Purple Martin numbers; however, a count of 800+ in *Adams*, OH, Jun 25 (TB) was a fine mid-summer tally. Fish Crows took another step in their northward march as two were identified at *Carlyle L.*, IL, 19 Jun and 13 Jul (DKa). Despite the general dearth of Red-breasted Nuthatches last winter, a pair was found at *Richardson Wildlife Foundation* 1 Jul (AR), and singles were reported at 2 Iowa locations, providing that state's first summer records since 1993. Brown Creepers were surprisingly plentiful this summer: five were reported in Illinois, a male was at *Ft. Knox*, KY, 20–21 Jul (BPB), and one was observed carrying food near *Algona*, IA, 2 Jun (MK). The largest concentration occurred in *Indiana's Ft. Harrison S.P.*, where 12 adults and two immatures were located on 7 territories (†ph. DG). Only two Bewick's Wrens were reported: a male was seen in *Janesville*, IL, 23 Jun (RCh), and another was in *Fairfield*, IA, 1 Jul (DP). An ad. Winter Wren was observed carrying food at the *Ravenna Army Ammunition Plant*, OH, 9 Jul (LRO). Sedge Wrens were unusually abundant in n.c. Iowa (m.ob.), provided counts of over 100 at the *Richardson Wildlife Foundation*, IA, June–July (AR), and were found at 7 sites in Ohio—all suggesting that this species enjoyed a successful breeding season. Two singing male Golden-crowned Kinglets were found at the traditional *Medina*, OH, site 19 Jun (RHn, SW).

Two mid-June warbler reports from Iowa were especially interesting. A male Golden-winged Warbler was found 17–19 Jun in an e. *Warren* brushy pasture usually occupied by Blue-winged Warblers (JSi), and a very late Tennessee was in *W. Des Moines* 17–18 Jun (PA, RA). Considerably farther south than normally expected were three singing male Chestnut-sided Warblers found in *Hoosier N.F.* 6 Jun (AB et al.). *Indiana's* first July Yellow-rumped Warbler, an ad. male, was discovered in n. *Lake* 18 Jul (†JB). Late June or early July Black-throated Green Warblers were reported in Illinois

and at 2 *Indiana* sites. Three Swainson's Warblers were found along the *Current R.*, *Shannon*, MO, 19 Jun (KR). A male Canada Warbler at *Stebbins' Gulch*, OH, 10 Jul (EP) was unexpected.

Clay-colored Sparrows are a marginal breeding species in the Region; consequently the reports of late June–early July birds at 2 n. Illinois locations and two males in *Emmet*, IA, are noteworthy. It was a fine year for Henslow's Sparrow, especially in Iowa and Illinois where considerable expansion occurred. A White-crowned Sparrow in *Dickinson*, IA, 5 Jun (LS), provided that state's 2nd summer record. Blue Grosbeaks were plentiful; highlights included 12+ in *Adams*, OH, 25 Jun (TB) and a report that they were unusually numerous in c. Missouri (*vide* JW). It was also a fine summer for Dickcissels, especially in Illinois and Iowa. Peak counts included 48 nests at *Prairie Ridge State Natural Area*, IL (JWa, EK), and 105 birds in *Monroe*, IL, 7 Jun (KMc). Reports from Iowa and Illinois indicated that Bobolinks were also abundant. Most surprising was the discovery of a Yellow-headed Blackbird colony at *Metzger Marsh W.M.A.*, OH; at least three males were present since late May, and an immature was seen 29 Jul (BM). A Pine Siskin in *Algona*, IA, was seen until 20 Jun and likely nested (MK). An ad. Eur. Tree Sparrow was observed carrying food at *Clinton L.*, IL, 28 Jun (MRe), reflecting the eastward march of this species.

### RARITIES COMMITTEE UPDATE

A Mew Gull report from *Eastlake*, OH, 9 Jan 1998 (†JP) was accepted by the Ohio Bird Records Committee.

### CORRIGENDUM

The 1998 Illinois Yellow-billed Loon report (*NAB* 53: 169) should have read: The season's best diver, however, was a Yellow-billed Loon that lingered on *L. Evergreen*, *Woodford* and *McLean*, 19–23 Dec (JE, MRe, RCh, †RH, m.ob).

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Place names that are frequently mentioned, but very long, may be abbreviated in a form such as "C.B.B.T." or "W.P.B.O." Such local abbreviations will be explained in a key at the beginning of the particular regional report in which they are used. In most regions, place names given in italic type are counties. Standard abbreviations that are used throughout *North American Birds* are keyed on page 358.