

Illinois & Indiana



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Full weather was warm and dry through mid-October and cold and dry thereafter, a pattern consistent with the impending El Niño forecast. The limited precipitation concentrated the waders, providing a fine shorebird season.

Birders' discussions were dominated by concern about the impact of West Nile virus on our bird populations. As might be expected, based on the type of sampling normally produced by birding, assessments covered the spectrum. In Chicago, Walter Marcisz was convinced that "Silent Fall"

described the autumn flight, citing a precipitous decline in American Crows in the Lake Calumet area. Also invoking West Nile, Keith McMullen noted a maximum central Illinois crow count of 450, compared to 5000 during the same time frame in 2001. In northeastern Indiana, Jim Haw termed songbird numbers "dreadfully low" and noted that raptor rehabilitators reported a large increase in sick and dying hawks and owls. In contrast, based on a comparison of individual species numbers over the past 15 years, the fall flight along the Indiana lakefront was superb, with loons, grebes, terns, vireos, swallows, and flycatchers all occurring in exceptional numbers. So, the jury is still out on West Nile.

Birders across the Region were saddened by the tragic death of Robert T. Chapel, who died this fall in an automobile accident. In the words of Steve Bailey, "Bob had been a fixture in the local (Illinois) birding community for nearly 30 years." Throughout my eleven years as Regional Editor of the Middlewestern Prairie Region, Bob served as the subregional Illinois editor for the fall season. His submissions were invariably of high quality, and I

especially appreciated his historical perspectives for the rare birds. As a member of the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee, Bob also frequently served as my liaison to that group. His shoes will be tough to fill.

Abbreviations: Carl. L. (Carlyle L., Clinton, Fayette, & Bond, IL); I.B.S.P (Illinois Beach S.P., on the lakefront 16 km s. of the Wisconsin line), Jax. P. (Jackson Park on the Chicago lakefront), L. Cal. (Lake Calumet), L. Chau. (Lake Chatauqua N.W.R., IL); L. Gibs. (Lake Gibson, sw. Indiana), Mill. B. (Miller Beach, IN, the southernmost point on L. Michigan).

LOONS THROUGH IBIS

It was a fine fall for Red-throated Loons, with the best flight ever (10 birds) in the L. Lemon—L. Monroe area of Indiana (JHv & SHv), a record 84 along the Indiana lakefront (including a dozen birds on 13 Nov, JMc), and 6 singles scattered across the Illinois interior. Pacific Loon reports included an imm. at L. Lemon, IN 23-24 Oct (DRW, †JHv, & SHv), one at Carl. L. 2 Nov (KR), a single at L. Decatur, IL 4-5 Nov (TM), and 2 at L. Chau. 10-16 Nov (KR et al.). An unprecedented mid-Nov movement southward from Lake Michigan dominated the fall Common Loon flight. On 16 Nov, cen. Indiana was awash in loons, with 498 at L. Lemon (DRW, JHv, & SHv), 165 at Summit L. (Haw et al.), 477 at Prairie Creek Res. (Haw et al.), and 545 at Eagle Creek Park near Indianapolis (RFB). The following day, 840 were counted at the latter site (LPv). These totals constitute four of the five largest inland counts ever recorded in Indiana.

Peak Horned Grebe tallies included a record 619 on the Indiana lakefront 13 Nov (JMc) and 120 at L. Springfield, IL 11 Nov (KAM). Red-necked Grebes staged a strong flight, with 17 reported on the Indiana lakefront and 4 at inland Illinois sites. Western Grebes were also plentiful. The earliest birds arrived at Horseshoe L., IL 11-12 Oct (KAM, FH) and at Mill. B. 13 Oct+ (BJG, JMc, JKC, m. ob.). Other Illinois records included singles at East Fork L., Richland 1 Nov (LH) and at I.B.S.P 29 Nov (AFS).

In Illinois, American White Pelicans peaked at 7200 in Putnam (CMc, JMc). One pelican wandered e. to nw. Indiana, where it appeared in n. Lake 5 Oct (CMa) and was seen there irregularly thereafter. The 3000+ Double-crested Cormorants at L. Gibs. 12 Oct (G&LB) provided a record count for Indiana. The most interesting cormorant report consisted of 2 Neotropical Cormorants on Carl. L.; an ad. was present 27 Jul—7 Oct, and a subad. was seen 17 Aug (DKa, m. ob., ph.). The only Least Bittern reported was at Pine Creek W.M.A., IN 24 Aug (CHe, RHe). Impressive Great Egret concentrations included 7700 in Calhoun, IL 2 Aug (KAM), 1046 at L. Chau. 1 Aug (RBj, SBJ), and 570+

in the L. Gibs. area 2 Sep (JMc, RHe et al.). Little Blue Herons peaked 15 Jul, when 607 were counted at Horseshoe L., IL (KAM). An early fall influx of Snowy Egrets into sw. Indiana yielded a state record 55 birds in the L. Gibs. area 2 Sep (JMc, DG et al.). A Green Heron at Mill. B. 23 Nov (†Haw et al.) provided Indiana's latest fall record. The Region's largest night-heron count consisted of 230 Black-crowned at Horseshoe L., IL 16 Jul (KAM). The season's only ibis was an unidentified *Plegadis* in Putnam, IL 26 Oct (LC, PCr).

WATERFOWL THROUGH CRANES

By far the largest Greater White-fronted Goose count consisted of 153 at L. Chau. 14 Nov (RBj, SBj). Accompanying the Snow Goose flight, which peaked 18 Nov with 8000 birds at Baldwin L., IL (KAM), were 9 Ross's Geese in Illinois and 2 in Indiana. Impressive Richardson's Canada Geese (race *hutchinsi*) tallies included 348 in Woodford, IL (MF) and 95 at Salamonie Res., IN 26 Nov (Haw). The peak Tundra Swan count consisted of 225 at Spring L. in Carroll, IL 16 Nov (DTW). Noteworthy puddle duck concentrations included 290 Wood Ducks in Putnam, IL 15 Aug (DFS), 3000 Gadwall at Horseshoe L. IL, 31 Oct (KAM), 3000 Blue-winged Teal in Putnam, IL 8 Sep (CMc, JMc), and 2700 Northern Shovelers at Clear L., IL 10 Oct (RBj, SBj). The season's only rare dabbler was a Eurasian Wigeon in Richland, IL 1 Nov (LH). Diving duck numbers were quite modest. Lesser Scaup were especially scarce; fewer than half the number recorded annually over the past 15 fall flights were counted on the Indiana lakefront (KJB).

Highlighted by a flyby female or imm. male King Eider at Mill. B. 3 Nov (JMc), the sea duck picture was considerably brighter. It was an excellent season for Surf Scoters, with 45 and 30 birds reported respectively at inland Illinois and Indiana sites. Peak inland tallies included 16 Surfs at Melvin Price Dam, IL 28 Oct—30 Nov (CML, JMa) and 8 at L. Monroe, IN 11 Nov (DRW). Following a slow start, White-winged Scoters staged a modest flight, with 52 in Indiana and 18 in Illinois. Black Scoters were also more plentiful than normal, especially at inland sites, with 22 in Indiana and 7 in Illinois, including an inland record of 16 Blacks at Summit L., IN 16 Nov (EB, Haw et al.). The season's only Harlequin Duck consisted of a female at Winthrop Harbor, on the n. Illinois lakefront 22-29 Nov (AFS, m. ob.). Peak merganser counts included 510 Hoodeds at L. Chau. 21 Nov (RBj, SBj) and a record 3400+ Red-breasteds off West Beach, IN 13 Nov (JMc et al.). Early single Common Mergansers arrived in Marshall, IL 15 Sep and at Mill. B. 28 Sep (BJG).

The major Sharp-shinned Hawk flight occurred 13 Oct; on that date, 168 passed the

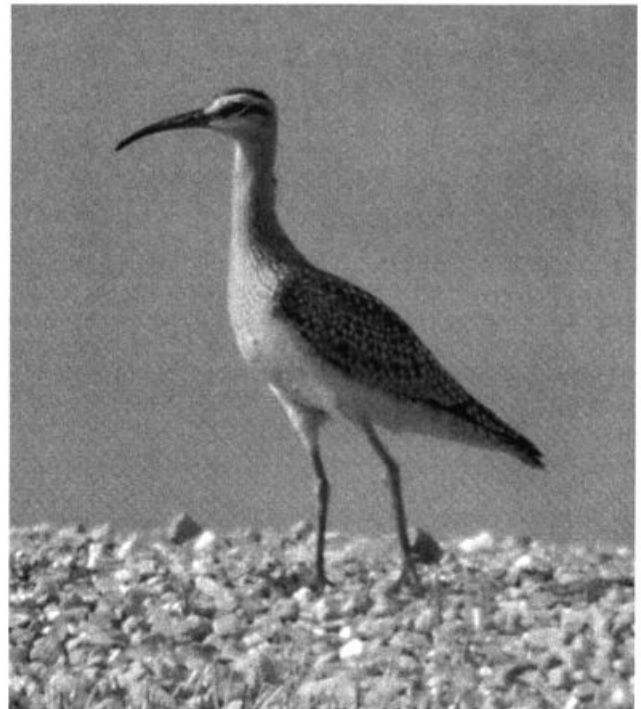
I.B.S.P. hawkwatch (VB), and 35 were at L. Lemon, IN (JHv, SHv, LSt). The hoped-for invasion of Northern Goshawks failed to materialize; indeed, only one bird was reported. Peak counts of other migrating hawks at I.B.S.P. included 229 Broad-wingeds 22 Sep, 256 Red-taileds 1 Nov, 11 Rough-leggeds 1 Nov, and 50 Merlins 3 Oct (VB). A very early Merlin arrived at Pine Creek W.M.A., IN 10 Aug (†AWB, RHe, CCM), tying the state's earliest arrival date. The only rare rail reported was a Yellow in Franklin, IL 26 Oct (LSy). A Purple Gallinule remained at the Mermet L., IL breeding site until 1 Sep (†FB). The Region's largest Common Moorhen count was 17 at L. Cal. (WJM), which constitutes the best fall tally from that site in a decade. At the Jasper—Pulaski W.M.A., IN staging area, Sandhill Crane numbers peaked 26 Nov, with a record 34,629 (Indiana D.N.R.).

SHOREBIRDS

Maximum counts of the regular plovers included 54 Black-bellieds at Mill. B. 16 Aug (MT0), 29 American Golden-Plovers in Kendall, IL 15 Sep (UG), 42 Semipalmateds at L. Cal. 20 Aug (WJM), and 6000 Killdeer at Carl. L. 4 Jul (DKa), the latter a clear pre-migration aggregation. It was a good season for Piping Plovers, with 11 in Illinois and five in Indiana.

Black-necked Stilts peaked 31 Jul, with 14 in Alexander, IL (KAM); 2 lingered there until 3 Sep (FB). American Avocets were fairly scarce, with only 16 in Illinois and 11 in Indiana; the maximum count was 10 at L. Chau. 3 Sep (KR). One tardy Greater Yellowlegs remained at Palos, IL until 23 Nov (CT). The maximum Upland Sandpiper counts were

disturbingly low: 3 in McHenry, IL 15 Aug and 2 in Miami, IN (MH, RHe). The highlight of the fall Whimbrel flight was a state record 37 birds (including one flock of 28) seen during a 15 Sep lakewatch at Mill. B. (JMc, BJG et al.). Inland Whimbrel reports included singles at L. Gib. 1-2 Sep (JMc, GB, LAC, RHe,



It was a good fall for Whimbrel in the Illinois & Indiana Region, with record counts on Lake Michigan. Two birds, including this one at Lake Gibson, Gibson County, Indiana 1-2 September 2002, were reported at inland sites. Photograph by Jeffrey J. McCoy.

ph.) and in Johnson, IL 8 Sep (FB). The largest Marbled Godwit tally consisted of 6 at L. Chau. 25 Aug (RJ). A migrating flock of 52 Hudsonian Godwits observed flying inland at Michigan City 1 Aug (JMc, JKC, KJB, EP) doubled Indiana's previous maximum count.

It was a good year for Red Knots, especially at inland sites, with 11 inland and 17 lakefront birds reported. Maximum counts of more common sandpipers included 2234 Semipalmateds at L. Chau. 1 Aug (RBj, SBj), 550 Leasts at L. Chau. 27 July (KR), 5000 Pectorals at Swan L., IL 2 Aug (KAM, DKa), 441 Stilts at L. Chau. 22 Aug (RBj, SBj), 60 Buff-breasteds at L. Chau 22 Sep (KR), 90

SA In late summer, non-breeding American Golden-Plovers occasionally appear in the Region. Many of these birds are extremely worn; some are virtually devoid of spotting on the upperparts. Consequently, when a drab plover appeared 22 Aug at the Wakarusa Wastewater Treatment Facility in Elkhart, IN it was assumed to be a worn golden-plover. The bird proved to be unusually confiding, so the observers (†DSt, BB, ph.) elected to take a few photographs. The plover, which was standing on pavement adjacent to a short-grass field, departed soon after the pictures were taken. Virtually by accident, the color prints were subsequently shown to a group of lakewatchers who had birding experience in the West; it was immediately recognized as the Region's first **Mountain Plover**. Scanned images were e-mailed to three western birders who have extensive experience with this species; all agreed that the bird was indeed a Mountain Plover. This record is rendered even more remarkable in view of recent population declines experienced by this species.

Short-billed Dowitchers at Montrose 17 Aug (JE), and 84 Wilson's Snipe in Steuben, IN 7 Nov (Haw et al.). A very tardy Buff-breasted Sandpiper at L. Gibs. 27 Oct (G & LB) provided Indiana's latest record. Purple Sandpipers were restricted to Michigan City Harbor, IN, where single immms. were seen 9 (JMc, JKC, ph., m. ob.), 28 (JMc, BJG, PBG), & 29 Nov (JMc). The 28 Nov bird provided a Thanksgiving Day feast for the local Peregrine (JMc). Perhaps the season's best shorebird was a Ruff at Carl. L. 17-19 Aug (DKa). It was a good fall for Wilson's Phalaropes, with 42 in Illinois and 13 in Indiana; the maximum count was 22 at L. Chau. 17 Aug (KR, LA). Lakefront Red Phalaropes reports included a juv. at Chicago 6-8 Nov (LO, TSc), plus singles at Michigan City Harbor, IN and Mill. B. Inland records included 2 at Baker's L., IL 24-25 Sep (JB, m. ob.) and one at L. Shelbyville, IL 28 Sep (TM).

JAEGERS THROUGH ALCIDS

The Indiana lakefront jaeger flight proved disappointing; this fall's 24 birds (one Pomarine, 5 Parasitics, 2 Long-taileds, and 16 unidentified) was the lowest since 1995. Perhaps the season's most remarkable report was a well-seen juv. Pomarine Jaeger at Mill. B. on the unprecedentedly early date of 11 Sep (†JMc, †JKC, PBG). Long-tailed Jaegers provided a highlight of the jaeger flight, with an ad. at Mill. B. 3 Sep (†KJB), a juv. at Carl. L. 7 Sep (†DKa), and a surprisingly late ad. at Dunes S.P. 2 Nov (†JMc). The latter constitutes the 2nd Nov Long-tailed for the Indiana lakefront, but the first ad. for that month.

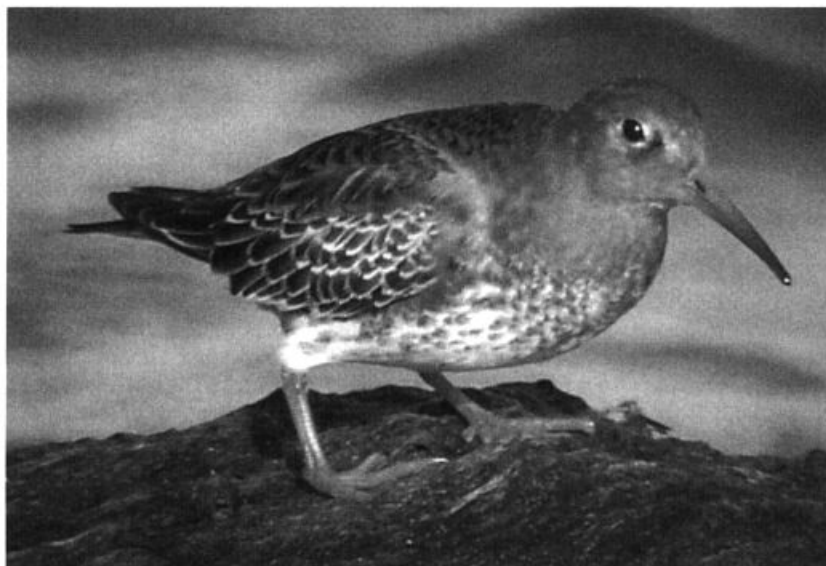
The season's only Little Gull was a first-winter bird at Carl. L. 26 Oct—30 Nov (†DKa et al.). Ad. California Gulls were identified at Michigan City Harbor 26 Nov (†KJB, RPa,

PBG) and Madison, IL 29 Nov (CML). A first-year Iceland Gull at Winthrop Harbor, IL 30 Nov (AFS) provided the season's only report. The Lesser Black-backed Gull continues to expand, with 10 birds reported in Illinois and 9 in Indiana. It was a good fall for Black-



Away from Lake Michigan, Piping Plovers are quite rare in the Illinois & Indiana Region. This juvenile found at Hurshtown Reservoir 16 August 2002 was one of two found in Allen County, Indiana this fall. Photograph by Jeffrey J. McCoy.

legged Kittiwakes, with 8, including a peak of 5 juvs., at Mill. B. 22 Nov (JMc, DGo, EMH, MTo); the only inland bird was a tarrock at Starved Rock, IL 29 Nov—1 Dec (CMc, JMk, m. ob.). Sabine's Gulls were restricted to Mill. B., where 7 were observed during the season.



This Purple Sandpiper, photographed 8 November 2002, was one of three that appeared at Michigan City Harbor, Indiana this fall. Appropriately, on Thanksgiving Day, one of the three provided repast for the local Peregrine Falcon. Photograph by John K. Cassidy.

A fine Common Tern movement occurred at Mill. B. 11 Sep, when 3500 were counted (JKC). Courtesy of Tropical Storm Lili, Illinois's first Sooty Tern appeared at the Joppa

boat ramp, Massac 4 Oct (†FB), only hours before this species was videotaped in Kentucky. The Region experienced an above-average Black Tern flight, with at least five triple-digit counts. The peak tally was 563 at Mill. B. 3 Sep (JMc, KJB). The Kentucky Long-billed Murrelet, seen on the Ohio R. at Louisville, also ventured into Indiana waters 29 Oct (BPB), providing the state's 4th record.

DOVES THROUGH PIPITS

Monk Parakeets, now firmly established in Chicago, are spilling into Indiana; on 24 Nov, 9 were reported in Hammond, IN (RHe, LAC, TH), providing the highest count ever for that state. Surprisingly few "eared owls" were reported. The season total consisted of one Long-eared and 2 Short-eared. Northern Saw-whet Owls made a much better showing, with an astonishing 57, including a peak of 11 on 11 Nov, banded in Brown, IN (RBt). Interestingly, 51 percent of these Saw-whets were captured on three nights between 1 and 17 Nov (inclusive). A carefully identified Ruby-throated Hummingbird remained at a Monroe, IN feeder through 11 Nov (JHv, SHv) to establish a new late date for the state (ph.

reviewed by Nancy Newfield). An ad. male Rufous Hummingbird was in Perry, IL Oct—25 Dec (†RLC et al.), and a female was banded at Mt. Vernon, IL 14 Nov (†CHu). At least 5 Rufous/Allen's hummingbirds were present in Indiana. A tally of 44 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers was made in n. Lake, IN 5 Oct (SBg, JKC et al.) to establish a new fall maximum for Indiana.

The tardy flycatcher list included a record-late Eastern Wood-pewee in Clark, IN 31 Oct (JMc), plus an Acadian Flycatcher in Massac, IL 3 Oct (FB). Highlight of the flycatcher migration was an Ash-throated Flycatcher that appeared at Montrose, IL 10 Nov (†RHu). The only other unusual flycatcher was a Western Kingbird seen in Pere Marquette S.P., IL 2 Sep (RJ). The first of 4 Northern Shrikes reported this season appeared in Elkhart, IN 30 Oct (DSt et al.). An impressive 16 Bell's Vireos were found at a Sullivan, IN reclaimed strip mine 24 Aug (LSt), and one lingered in Whiteside, IL

until 6 Sep (DJS). Lingering vireos included a Blue-headed in Jax. P. 16 Nov (PRC) and a Philadelphia at Chicago's Morton Arboretum 10 Oct (MBC).

Sizeable Blue Jay movements occurred at L. Lemon, IN 13 Oct (JHv, SHv) and in Fulton, IL 12 Oct (KAM), with 580 and 377 birds respectively. The only large swallow concentration was of 50,000 Trees at Carl. L. 12 Oct (KAM). Only the faintest trace of a Red-breasted Nuthatch flight was recorded; a paltry 6 were reported across the Region. Other noteworthy single-day totals included 47 Winter Wrens at Jax. P. 29 Oct (PRC), 250 Golden-crowned Kinglets in Chicago's Grant Park 16 Oct (DFS), and 102 E. Bluebirds at I.B.S.P. 5 Oct (SHu, EW). The latest among several tarrying Blue-gray Gnatcatchers was at Beverly Shores, IN 2 Nov (BJG). Impressive *Catharus* thrush counts included 94 Swainson's at L. Lemon, IN 22 Sep (JHv, SHv) and 106 Hermits in Chicago's Grant Park 16 Oct (DFS). American Pipits were quite plentiful; peak tallies included 200 at L. Chau. 12 Oct (KR) and 178 in LaSalle, IL 3 Nov (CMc, JMK).

WARBLERS THROUGH FINCHES

Assessments of the warbler flight ranged from dismal to about average. The season's best warbler was a male Townsend's Warbler at Montrose (Chicago lakefront) 12 Oct (GG, †RHu, †GAW). Hoosier birders have discovered that like Chicago, plantings in downtown Indianapolis attract migrant warblers; late warblers recorded there this fall included: an Ovenbird 28 Nov (DG), a Northern Waterthrush 24 Oct (*vide* CHe), and a Mourning 18 Oct (RHe, CH). Other noteworthy warbler reports included an early female Tennessee at I.B.S.P. 3 Aug (EW), 10 Orange-crowns in n. Lake, IN 12 Oct (JMc et al.), a late Northern Parula in Chicago's Lincoln Park 16 Nov (†GAW), a longshore flight of 570+ Yellow-rumpeds at the Hammond lakefront Sanctuary, IN 28 Sep (P&JK et al.), single Black-throated Blues at Carl. L. 15 & 27 Sep (DKa, KAM), a Cerulean in Rockford, IL 13 Sep (DTW), and 2 Prothonotary Warblers in Indiana Dunes S.P. 7 Sep (RPa).

An impressive 8 Blue Grosbeaks were found in Clay, IN 17 Aug (AWB), and another lingered in Johnson, IL until 11 Oct (FB). Spotted Towhees were restricted to Illinois, with the following records: a male in Chicago's Grant Park 16 Oct (DFS), a female in Evanston 18 Oct—5 Nov (BN, EW), and a female at Jax. P. 10-19 Nov (PRC). The 150 Chipping Sparrows recorded at Fort Harrison Park, IN 13 Oct (DGo) constitutes an all-time maximum for the state. Surprisingly, for the first autumn in 24 years of observation, Field Sparrows were not recorded in Jax. P. (PRC). Peak

counts of the less-common sparrows included 24 Henslow's in Clay, IN 3 Aug (AWB), 10+ Le Conte's at Prairie Ridge W.M.A., IL 9 Oct (LH), and 15 Nelson's Sharp-taileds at L. Chau. 10 Oct (KR). A Lincoln's Sparrow lingered in downtown Indianapolis until 21 Nov (RHe). Harris's Sparrows were quite scarce, with only two reports: singles were found in Evanston, IL 1 Nov (EW) and in Indiana Dunes S.P. 3 Oct (BJG). Lapland Longspurs were widespread; the peak count was 250 in Parke, IN 8-15 Nov (AWB). Quite impressive for fall were the flights of 20 Bobolink and 57 Eastern Meadowlarks at I.B.S.P. 5 Oct (EW, SHu).

Winter finches were in tune with the fact that this was not an invasion year and virtually boycotted the Region. The season's tally sheet contained a smattering of Purple Finches, one Red Crossbill record, and 3 Pine Siskins. American Goldfinches, however, failed to get the message and were present in good numbers, as reflected by a longshore flight of 4730 at I.B.S.P. 5 Oct (EW).

Contributors cited (subregional editors in boldface): Louise Augustine, Susan Bagby (SBg), Ellie Baker, Frank Bennett, Vic Berardi, Richard Bjorklund (RBj), Sigurd Bjorklund (SBj), Gary and Lisa Bowman (G&LB), Robert Bradley (RBr), Bill Breidenthal, Ross Brittain (RBt), Kenneth J. Brock, Joan Bruck-

man, Alan W. Bruner (Indiana), Robert F. Buskirk, Lynne Carpenter, Lee A. Casebere, John K. Cassady, Brian L. Chandler, Melinda Born-Chapman, Paul R. Clyne, Peter Cruikshank (PCr), Josh Engel, Matt Fraker, Urs Geiser, Glenn Giacinto, Don Gorney, Brendan J. Grube, Peter B. Grube, Leroy Harrison, Jim Haw (Haw), Cloyce Hedge (CHe), Michelle Hedge, Roger Hedge (RHe), Jim Hengeveld (JHv), Susan Hengeveld (SHv), Frank Holmes, Edward M. Hopkins, Steve Huggins (SHu), Robert Hughes (RHu), Tom Hulvershorn, Cathie Hutcheson (CHu), Rhetta Jack, Dan Kassebaum (DKa), Phil and Joanne Kelly (P&JK), Travis Mahan, Charlene Malone (CML), Jim Malone (JMa), Carolyn Marsh (CMA), Walter J. Masrcisz, Jeff McCoy (JMc), Cynthia McKee (CMc), John McKee (JMK), Keith A. McMullen (KAM), Clint C. Murray, Beryl Nelson, Link Olsen, Larry Peavler (LPv), Brainard Palmer-Ball (BPB), Randy Pals (RPa), Ed Powers, Kevin Richmond, Tom Schulenberg, Darrell J. Shambaugh, Leonard Stanley (LSy), Lee Sterrenburg (LSt), Alan F. Stokie, Dan Stoltzfus (DSt), Douglas F. Stotz (Illinois), Craig Thayer, Michael Topp, Eric Walters, Donald R. Whitehead, Dan T. Williams, Jr., and Geoff A. Williamson. Many other observers contributed information to the various state lists but could not be personally acknowledged here; all have our appreciation. ☺

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2004 BIRDING TOURS

VIETNAM
North, South
2-25 January

THAILAND
Northwest, Central,
Peninsular
3-25 January

PHILIPPINES
Luzon, Mindanao, Cebu,
Palawan, Bohol, Negros
30 January-1 March

WEST BURMA
Mt. Victoria, Pagan
5-28 March

2003 BIRDING TOURS

MALAYSIA
Malaya, Borneo (Mt. Kinabalu)
4-27 July

**NORTH BURMA
EXPEDITION**
SE Himalayas
1-30 November

MALAYSIA
Malaya,
Borneo,
Mt. Kinabalu
3-25 July

**SOUTH
SUMATRA**
30 July-22 August

BHUTAN
2-25 April

NW CHINA
Xinjiang Province
21 May-13 June

TIBET TRAVERSE
12 June-13 July