

# Illinois & Indiana



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The summer-season jet stream became oriented directly over southern Lake Michigan, steering a series of moisture-laden storms across the Region. This pattern produced above-normal precipitation during the breeding season. In central Illinois, Richard Bjorklund reported slight flooding through the end of July. Additionally, July was comparatively cool, averaging about one degree below normal. After the Fourth of July weekend, there were no 90°+ F days.

The cool wet summer spurred a burst of late-season breeding activity among

grassland species. As a result, remarkably high counts of Sedge Wren, Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, and Dickcissel were reported in both states. The increased precipitation also provided a sorely-needed boost for wetland breeders. And no doubt the presence of thick, luxurious vegetation was also beneficial to many woodland species. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, for example, were recorded in unprecedented numbers.

Roseate Spoonbill and Fulvous Whistling-Duck were among the highlights of the season.

**Abbreviations:** Carl. L. (Carlyle L., s. IL); I.B.S.P. (Illinois Beach S.P., Lake); Chau (L. Chautauqua N.W.R., Mason); G.L.N.T.C. (Great Lakes Naval Training Center, Lake, IL); L. Cal. (L. Calumet, s. Chicago); L.M.S.F. (Lowden-Miller S.F., Ogle, IL); Mill. B. (Miller Beach, IN, the southernmost point on L. Michigan); T.N.C.K.S. (The Nature Conservancy Kankakee Sands wetland, Newton, IN).

## LOONS THROUGH VULTURES

As is typical, a handful of basic-plumaged Common Loons lingered in the Region, 3 in Indiana and 2 in Illinois. Numerous reports of young Pied-billed Grebes suggested a successful breeding season for that species. A tardy Horned Grebe lingered on L. Michigan off Mill. B. to 18 Jun (MTo, JJM). American White Pelicans remained plentiful this summer, with peak counts of 1870 at Chau 31 Jul (RBj, SBj) and 280 at Hennepin L., IL 27 Jul (CMc). Double-crested Cormorants were reported breeding at Carl. L. (DMK), and triple-digit summer counts were recorded at four Illinois locations.

It was an above-average breeding season for American Bitterns, with sightings at four Indiana and one Illinois locations. Small numbers of Least Bitterns were reported across the Region, with a dozen in Illinois and 10 in Indiana. It was a spectacular summer for Great Egrets. Breeding was reported as far n. as L. Cal., where 15–20 nests were counted 12 Jul (WJM), while an impressive 3500 were recorded at Horseshoe L., Madison, IL 26 Jul (KAM). Great Egret counts exceeding 100 birds were reported at four other Illinois locations. Fifty Snowy Egrets nests were estimated at Alorton, IL 16 Jun (VK), and some 500 birds (including young) were at Horseshoe L., Madison, IL 28 Jul (DMK). Little Blue Heron numbers were even more impressive, with an estimated 600 nests at Alorton, IL 16 Jun (VK) plus a successful nesting, for the 5th consecutive year, at L. Cal. (WJM). The peak Little Blue count was 1200 ads. plus young at Horseshoe L., Madison, IL 26 Jul (KAM). The rare Tricolored Heron also made appearances this summer: singles were at T.N.C.K.S. 7–9 Jun (ph. JHz, JJM, †Haw et al.) and at L. Cal. 25 Jul (DFS). Cattle Egrets were strikingly scarce in Indiana, with only one reported; however, an estimated 1000 nests were present at Alorton, IL 16 Jun (VK). Black-crowned Night-Heron nest counts included 400 at Alorton, IL 16 Jun (VK), 320 at L. Cal. 10 May–18 Jul (WJM), and 90 young in nests on the East Chicago, IN lakefront 2 Jul (*vide* JSC). The summer's "best" bird was an imm. Roseate Spoonbill at Vandalia, Fayette, IL 22 Jun–8 Jul (ph. TAM, DMK, m. ob.). On 14 Jul, the bird moved to Carl. L., where it remained until mid-Aug. (DMK). The season's peak Turkey Vulture count consisted of 221 in Daviess, IN 23 Jul (LSt, DSe).

## WATERFOWL THROUGH CRANES

A Fulvous Whistling-Duck graced Crab Orchard N.W.R., IL 21–29 Jun (DMK),

**SA** One of the season's better reports was of a flock of 11 **Hudsonian Godwits** seen flying high (30–60 m) over Michigan City Harbor at sunset on 30 Jul (BJG), the Region's 2nd summer-season record. Only two decades ago, Hudsonian Godwits were considered accidental in Indiana; however, lakewatches conducted over the past four years reveal that autumn flocks, often quite large, regularly migrate down L. Michigan between late Jul and early Sep. Prior to 1999, Indiana's maximum Hudsonian count was of 8 birds. Since 1999, some 11 late-summer and early-fall flocks (seven of which contained more than 10 birds, including a maximum of 52) have been recorded on L. Michigan's shores. These birds rarely land, which apparently explains why they were not often detected in the past.

## SHOREBIRDS

An early Black-bellied Plover arrived 13 Jul at Michigan City Harbor, IN (JJM). Black-necked Stilts were reported at three sites in extreme s. Illinois (DMK, KAM, TAM), where they have occurred in recent summers. Reports outside this area included 3 at Carlson L., *Fulton*, IL 7 Jun (TAM) and one in Posey, IN 30 Jun (ph. JJM). Summer American Avocet reports included singles at Mill. B. 10 Jul (JKC, KJB) and Chau 31 Jul (RBj, SBj), plus a flock of 10 at Mill. B. 18 Jul (JJM). The Upland Sandpiper breeding report was not encouraging; in Illinois, only 6 were reported at four locations, and in Indiana 8 birds were found at three sites. A strong Whimbrel flight occurred along the shores of s. L. Michigan, with 14 reported in Indiana and 3 in Illinois. The earliest arrivals consisted of 3 on 13 Jul at Mill. B. (JJM, BJG).

The Region's only Marbled Godwit occurred at Mill. B. 5 Jul (JKC, SBa, RP et al.). Ruddy Turnstones were surprisingly scarce this summer, with only 7 reported, which is roughly half the Region's normal summer total. A single

ph. TAM, KAM, m. ob.). Continuing the recent summer pattern, 4 Snow Geese lingered in the Region. In addition to successful breeding at established sites in s. Chicago, Mute Swans also nested in Rosemont, IL (AA) and in Springfield, IL, where an ad. and 6 young were observed (VK). Wood Duck broods were widely reported; perhaps the most significant report consisted of 200+ birds, mostly young, at Palos/Orland Park, IL in late Jul (WSS). Most surprising was the discovery of a female Gadwall with 12 young at L. Cal. 22 Jun (†WJM). Blue-winged Teal nesting was confirmed as far s. as Chau, where 25 ads. and 8 young were observed 19 Jun (RBj, SBj). Jul's nonbreeding ducks list included a male Northern Pintail at Carl. L. 8–26 Jul (DMK), a male Northern Pintail at Grand Kankakee Marsh, *Lake*, IN 10 Jul (JKC, KJB), a Canvasback in Monmouth Warren, IL 5 Jun–13 Jul (PR), a female Redhead at Hennepin L., IL 18 Jul (DTS), a male Ring-necked Duck at Hennepin L., IL 7 Jul (DTS), plus another at L. Lemon, IL 1 Jun–10 Jul (J & SH). Nesting Hooded Mergansers were widespread, with 10 broods reported in Illinois and three in Indiana. Broods of Ruddy Ducks were reported at Palos, IL in early Jul (WSS) and at Hennepin L., IL 7 & 18 Jul (DTS).

In Illinois, Ospreys fledged 2 young at Bergman Slough, *Cook* 18–19 Jul (WSS, CT), the first successful nesting at that site since 2000 (CT). A nest was also built but abandoned in Burnham, *Cook* (WJM, CMa). The Indiana D.N.R. implemented an Osprey reintroduction program by releasing 16 young birds at the Tri-County W.M.A., *Kosciusko* and *Patoka L.*, *Crawford* in mid-Jul (JSC). Osprey nesting efforts at new Indiana sites included a failed attempt at Hovey L., 3 chicks at *Patoka L.*, a failed effort in *Franklin*, and nest construction at *Pigeon River W.M.A.* (fide JSC). Missis-

sippi Kites returned to established breeding sites in both states. Extralimital kites were reported in Rockford, IL 9 Jul (BW) and at Brussels Ferry, *Jersey*, IL 20 Jul (BR). The only breeding Broad-winged Hawk reports consisted of a nest and fledgling at Woodstock, IL 9 May–27 Jun (DF) and a nest in Palos, IL (success not determined) 10 May–1 Jul (WSS, EWW). Illinois's resident Swainson's Hawks constructed three nests in *Kane* and two in *McHenry*; however, only one nest proved successful, fledging 2 young (RMO). The only reports of the ne. Illinois Gray Partridge population consisted of a female in *Lee* 26 Jul (CMc) and two pairs in *De Kalb* 6 May (DSh).



This Roseate Spoonbill at Vandalla, Fayette County, Illinois remained there from 22 June (here 25 June) to 8 July 2003, but spent 14 July through mid-August at nearby Carlyle Lake. Photograph by Travis Mahon.

It was a good breeding season for King Rails, as evidenced by an ad. with 8 chicks in *Gibson*, IN 30 Jun (CMi) and another ad. again with 8 chicks in *Greene*, IN 3 Jul (LSt). Common Moorhens were more widespread than normal, with nesting confirmed at L. Cal. 22 Jun (WJM), *Horseshoe L.*, *Madison*, IL 3 Jul (FH), *Beverly Shores*, IN 19 Jul (Jean Rudd), plus reports without breeding evidence from at least 11 other locations. Nesting Sandhill Cranes were reported in *Boone*, IL (MR) and *Elkhart*, IN (JKC et al.).

ad. Western Sandpiper at *Horseshoe L.*, *Madison*, IL 26–27 Jul (DMK, KAM et al.) provided the season's only report. Another good late-summer find was an ad. White-rumped Sandpiper at Carl. L. 24 Jul (DMK). Impressive counts of the regular waders included 3032 Lesser Yellowlegs at Chau 31 Jul (RBj, SBj), 543 Semipalmated Sandpipers at Chau 5 Jun (RBj, SBj), 200 Least Sandpipers at Carl. L. 30 Jul (DMK), 2000 Pectoral Sandpipers at *Horseshoe L.*, *Madison*, IL 28 & 30 Jul (DMK), and 44 Short-billed Dowitchers at Chau 31 Jul (RBj, SBj). A record-early

Buff-breasted Sandpiper was discovered at a turf farm in s. *Lake*, IN 28 Jul (LPv). Territorial Wilson's Phalaropes were observed at T.N.C.K.S. 28 Jun (JKC, KJB) and at two *Green*, IN locations 1 & 3 Jul (LSt et al.), strongly suggesting breeding. An ad. male Red-necked Phalarope in *Boone*, IN 4 Jun (RHe) provided the Region's only summer report.

## GULLS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

Laughing Gulls appeared in typical numbers, with 3 in Illinois and one in Indiana. The Region's only reported

Franklin's Gull was an ad. at Chau 13 Jul (RBj, SBj). Ring-billed Gulls did not nest at the Des Plaines, IL rooftop site this year, as special structures designed to repel the birds apparently thwarted their efforts (AA). However, nesting was reported from Evanston, where juvs. were noted 14 Jun (EWW), and there were an estimated 1000 nests at the established L. Cal. colony (WJM). An ad. Herring Gull was observed on a nest at Waukegan, IL 14 Jun (TAM).

Based on the virtual absence of summer juvs. along the Indiana lake-front, it appears that a majority of the 146 Caspian Tern nests at East Chicago steel mills proved unsuccessful. After 26 Common Tern nests at G.L.N.T.C. were destroyed in Jun by a marauding Coyote, a second effort produced 19 nests and 20+ chicks, which were banded 16 Jul (MW, BS). Forster's Terns returned as a nesting species to Chain O' Lakes S.P., Lake, IL where 80+ chicks were banded in Jun and Jul (MW). No nesting Least Terns were reported in Illinois, but Indiana had 25-30 ads. at the traditional Gibson site (CMi, *vide* JSC), and four nests were discovered at a new site in Spencer, IN 1 Jul (JSC). Though breeding Black Terns were not reported this summer, this species was present in above-average numbers. An unprecedented 110 migrants were counted at Mill. B. during the last half of Jul (BJG), and up to 8 summered at Hennepin L., IL (DFS, CMc, TAM).

The Eurasian Collared-Dove expan-

sion continued this summer, with 20 birds reported at 12 Illinois locations and 4 at three Indiana locations, including



A summer rarity in the Midwest, this Tricolored Heron was found at the hotspot Kankakee Sands in Newton County, Illinois, here 9 June 2003. Photograph by Jeffrey J. McCoy.

nests in Boone and Lawrence, IN (RHe, JSC). The White-winged Dove proliferation also continued: an ad. and an imm. (local nesting?) were at Waltonville, Jefferson, IL 14 Jul (DMK, ph. TAM, KAM) and an ad. was in Massac, IL 5-6 Jul (DMK, ph. TAM et al.). The Chicago-area Monk Parakeets had a fine breeding season, as evidenced by the presence of 28 nests and 60 ads. in Burnham 22 Jun (WJM), 14 ads. and five nests at Rainbow Beach 25 Jul (DFS), and 13 ads. and three nests at Calumet Park 25 Jul (DFS). Smaller colonies were reported at five other sites (AA). Outside the Chicago area, a nest with one to 3 birds was observed in Carlyle, IL 23 Jun-26 Jul (DMK, KAM).

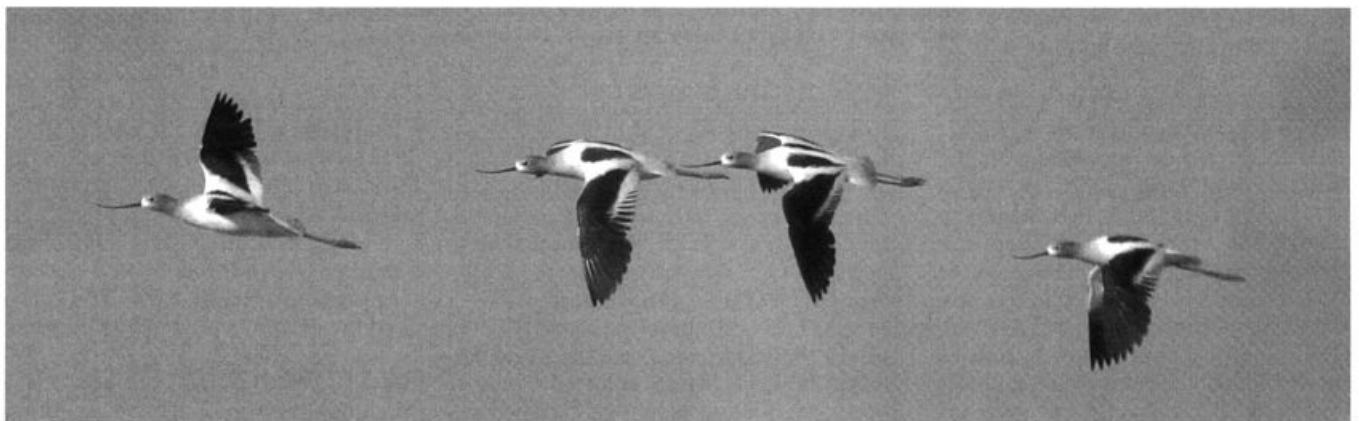
Both cuckoos were reported more frequently than in recent years. A host of correspondents attested to the continuing decline of breeding-period Common Nighthawks. Astronomical numbers of

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were reported in s. Illinois, where Vernon Kleen banded more than 200. Even more impressive was a conservatively estimated 300+ Ruby-throateds at an Alto Pass, Union, IL feeding station in Jun and Jul (BSt, *vide* VK); some observers believed that 2000 birds were present there (*vide* VK). Unexpected for the summer period was an ad. male Rufous Hummingbird in Springfield, IL 24-28 Jul (BL, *vide* TAM, †ph. HDB et al.).

### FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WARBLERS

Fine Acadian Flycatcher counts included 25 on a B.B.S. route in Hoosier N.F. 6 Jul (LSt, MCI) and 18 singing males in Indiana Dunes S.P. 18 Jun (WJM). A male Alder Flycatcher at I.B.S.P. 21 Jun (EWW) was very late for a migrant. The only reported Willow Flycatcher nest, which contained one egg, was found at L. Cal. 18 Jun (WJM). A singing Least Flycatcher in Brown, IN 10 Jun was surprising for this date and location; the bird was not relocated on subsequent days (LSt, MCI). Ad. and fledgling Western Kingbirds were observed at the established East St. Louis, IL nesting site 12-27 Jul (ph. DMK, KAM, KBo). Southern Indiana's first Western Kingbirds nest was discovered in Vanderburgh 29 Jun-4 Jul, where 2 ads. were observed carrying food (ph. JJM et al.). Once again, Scissor-tailed Flycatchers nested in s. Illinois. This summer, 2 ads. and 2 young were seen in Jackson 13 Jul (DMK, TAM). Peak Bell's Vireo counts included 21 in Sullivan, IN 6 Jul (DL) and 6 at Green River W.M.A., IL on the same date (CMc). A very tardy Blue-headed Vireo was seen in Cook, IL 4 Jun (JA).

On the down side, American Crows were still deemed quite scarce at L. Cal (WJM), and poor numbers of Northern Rough-winged Swallows were reported in s. Illinois (KAM). The Region's only



American Avocets have shown strong tendency to wander in the Midwest and Far West in recent years. These four (of ten present) were at productive Miller Beach in Lake County, Indiana 18 July 2003. Photograph by Jeffrey J. McCoy.

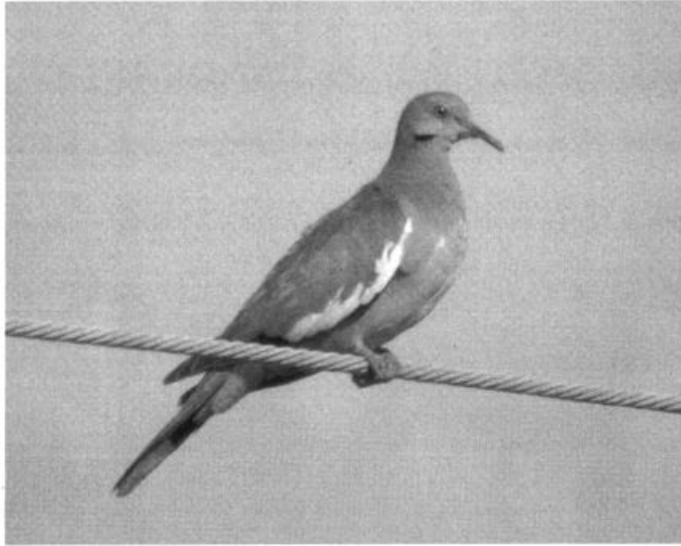
reported Brown Creeper nest was discovered at L.M.S.F. 4 Jul (DFS). The wet summer boded well for Sedge Wrens. Peak counts among the numerous reports consisted of 33 in Clay, Green, and Sullivan, IN 3 Aug (LSt) and 10 at Carl. L. 26 & 29 Jul (DMK). The largest Marsh Wren tally was of 22 males at L. Cal. 22 Jun (WJM). Suspected Golden-crowned Kinglet nesting at Chicago's Morton Arboretum, Du Page, IL 15 May (EWW) was confirmed 22 Jun, when 2 ads. were observed feeding young (DFS). A colossal Veery count was logged at L.M.S.F. 4 Jul: 25 ads., one fledgling, plus a nest with 3 young (DFS). Tardy Swainson's Thrushes lingered in Hammond, IN until 21 Jun (JBo) and in Cook, IL until 14 Jun (JA). The only reported Wood Thrush nest, which contained 2 young, was found in Winnebago, IL 23 Jun (DTW).

Summer-period Chestnut-sided Warblers were reported at 15 locations; the peak count consisted of 13 at L.M.S.F. 21 Jun (DFS et al.). A singing male Magnolia Warbler at I.B.S.P. 21 Jun (EWW) was unexpected. Black-throated Green Warblers have become rare but regular members of the summer avifauna in both Indiana and n. Illinois. This summer's report included seven reports after 10 Jun in Indiana and two in Illinois. The peak tally was of 14, counted during a 6 Jun B.B.S. in Hoosier N.F., IN (LSt, MCl). The breeding Blackburnian Warbler at Indiana Dunes S.P. returned for the 7th consecutive year (JKC, SBa, m. ob.). An agitated pair of Mourning Warblers was observed, with the female carrying food, in L.M.S.F. 4 Jul (DFS).

## SPARROWS THROUGH FINCHES

Clay-colored Sparrows nested at Springbrook Prairie Forest Preserve, Du Page, IL; an ad. and a juv. were observed there 13 Jul (UG). An ad. Lark Sparrow with 2 young in Du Page, IL 18 Jul–2 Aug (MCh) provided that county's first nesting record since the 1920s (*vide* VK). It was a superb breeding season for Grasshopper Sparrows, with peak counts of 84 in the reclaimed strip mines of w. Indiana 16 Jul (LSt) and

20+ at Lost Mound N.W.R., IL 21 Jun (VK et al.). Henslow's Sparrows were also unusually plentiful, with reports from 24 Indiana and 16 Illinois loca-



A species that may have nested in the Illinois & Indiana region in 2003, a White-winged Dove—one of five in the Region so far this year—was present 5 (here) to 8 July near Mermet Lake, Massac County, Illinois. Photograph by Travis Mahon.

tions; the peak count was 46 in Vermillion, IN 3 Aug (LSt). Reports of tardy White-throated Sparrows included three pairs in Chicago's Grant park through late Jun (DFS) and a single bird in the Hammond Lakefront Sanctuary, IN 14 Jun (SBa). A mid-summer Rose-breasted Grosbeak was unexpected in Owen, IN 21 Jun (DL). Peak Blue Grosbeak counts of 25 in sw. Indiana 20 Jul (LSt) and 11 in Johnson, IL 3 Jun (VK)



A rare breeder in Illinois, Western Kingbird was documented nesting for the first time in southern Indiana in Vanderburgh County 29 June (here) to 4 July 2003, with adults carrying food to the nest regularly at this time. Photograph by Jeffrey J. McCoy.

suggest that this species is prospering. Painted Buntings summered at the established East St. Louis breeding site: an ad. and a first-year male were present 21 May (DMK), an ad. male was banded 17 Jul (VK, DMK et al., ph.) and a female

and male were banded 26 Jul (DMK). The Dickcissel population exploded this summer, with the following impressive counts: 97 in Fayette, Marion, and Clay, IL 1 Jul (DFS), 95 in Vermillion, Clay, and Greene, IN 16 Jul (LSt, MCl), 91 in Greene and Sullivan, IN 6 Jul (LSt, DSe), 73 at Jamestown, IL 2 Jun (DMK), and 50 at Carl. L. 29 Jun (DMK).

In Illinois, nesting Yellow-headed Blackbirds were reported at Fulton Marsh, Carroll, where 6 were seen 20 Jun (VK et al.), at Garden Prairie Slough, Boone, where six nests were observed 8 Jun (MR), at Hoffman Estates, Cook, where young were being fed 28 Jun (CF, AA), and at Hennepin L., where ads. plus 5 fledglings were noted 12 Jul (CMc). An ad. male Baltimore Oriole experienced an especially bad day 1 Jun when it had to be rescued from the jaws of a Bullfrog at

a backyard birdbath in Lawrence, IN (JSC). The only Eurasian Tree Sparrows were reported in Fulton, IL, where 8 were counted 16 Jun (TL).

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