

The season began cool and wet, with the exception of very dry conditions in southern Missouri. Upper-level high pressure settled over Missouri in September, resulting in warmer and drier weather, while Iowa was stormy and wet, especially at the end of the month. The result was poor conditions for migration, too much water for shorebirds in the north, and dry wetlands in the south. Dry weather and normal to slightly above-normal temperatures in the south continued into early October, while Iowa cooled substantially during this period. Warmer conditions spread to the entire Region later in October, when the prevailing high pressure system shifted south-eastward, allowing Gulf moisture north into Missouri. One exception was a major cold front that passed over the region 8 October, resulting in the biggest migration of the season. Late October was warm and wet, especially in southern Iowa, northeastern Missouri, and southern Missouri, although northwestern Missouri was dry. November was relatively mild, with temperatures and rainfall near normal in Iowa; northeastern and southern Missouri had above-normal rainfall. However, the last few days of the month were extremely cold, causing marshes and ponds to freeze over after 24 November from Iowa to central Missouri. Several northern species also appeared in numbers in that last week of the period. Some observers noted fewer migrating waterfowl, shorebirds, and passerines than normal, with a few notable exceptions in raptors and rare gulls. The exceptional south-westerly flow of air and strong southerly wind patterns in late September through early October apparently brought in some interesting birds, including first state records of Black Skimmer and Tropical Kingbird in Missouri.

**Abbreviations:** Grammar (Grammar Grove, Marshall, IA); Hitchcock (Hitchcock W.M.A. hawkwatch, Pottawattamie, IA); M.S.L. (Maryville Sewage Lagoons, Nodaway, MO); R.E.D.A. (Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area, St. Charles, MO); Saylorville (Saylorville Res., Polk, IA); S.C. (Squaw Creek N.W.R., Holt, MO); S.R. (Smithville Res., Clay/Clinton, MO); T.G.P. (Tower Grove Park, St. Louis, MO); T.R.W. (Thompson River Wetlands, Livingston, MO).

### LOONS THROUGH FALCONS

Exceptional sightings of Red-throated Loon included 3 at Thomas Hill Res., Macon, MO 31 Oct (KM, DW) and single juvs. at Pleasant Creek R.A., Linn, IA 10–12 Oct (DP et al.) and Saylorville 5–6 Nov (AaB, JG). In light of the well-publicized abandonment of the American White Pelican colony at Chase L., ND in May, observers were alert for the species and carefully counted 14,000 at Saylorville, Polk, IA 30 Aug (JD) and 10,000 in Johnson, IA 18 Sep (CC), both typical high counts. A Neotropical Cormorant was seen by many at Saylorville 19–20 Nov (†AaB, †AJ, †JF, †JG, †MD). An in-

# Iowa & Missouri



credible 512 Great Egrets were at Runnells W.A., Marion, IA 23 Aug (Reid & Pam Allen, JG, CE), and a very late individual was at R.E.D.A. 21–23 Nov (Ryan Douglas). Late Snowy Egrets include a record-late individual at Saylorville 11–23 Oct (†JG, AaB, WO) and 3 at T.R.W. 31 Oct (SK). The latest of many Missouri *Plegadis* ibis sightings was of 4–5 at S.C. 20–28 Nov (Linda Williams, MR). Three Roseate Spoonbills were at Ten Mile Pond C.A., Mississippi, MO 26 Aug–21 Sep (†Rob Vinson, DW), a high number.

Waterfowl migration was generally delayed, with numbers well below normal. For example, Snow Geese in Iowa peaked at a mere 5917 in Pottawattamie, IA 21 Nov (MO); normal counts are in the hundreds of thousands. Observers reported Cackling Goose with details at two sites in Missouri and six in Iowa; the earliest report was of 24 at M.S.L. 4 Nov (DE) and the high count was of about 200 in Carroll, IA 28 Nov. Tundra Swans peaked at 3000 on Pool #9, Mississippi R., Allamakee, IA 25–26 Nov (JG, DA, Fred Leshner, DeC). Many commented on the low numbers of ducks, speculating that migration was delayed, that birds passed west of the Region, or that they were dispersed by wide-

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spread wet conditions. One of few large concentrations was 820 Green-winged Teal at Saylorville 22 Oct (AaB). Canvasbacks along the Mississippi R. in Allamakee, IA peaked at 43,000 on 13 Nov (DA). Up to 48 Greater Scaup were at Spirit L., Dickinson, IA 6–26 Nov (LS, ET). There were numerous scoters in Missouri this fall, but the three species were scarcer in Iowa. The earliest Surf Scoter was an ad. female at Long Branch L., Macon, MO 31 Oct (KM, DW); Surfs were reported at five other Missouri and five Iowa sites, mostly imms. or females. At M.S.L. were up to 5 White-winged Scoters, including an ad. male, 20 Oct–19 Nov (DE), with small numbers of imms. and females at two sites each in Missouri and Iowa. The first Black Scoters were 5 at R.E.D.A. 1 Nov (JE, Wally George), and there were 6 there on 17 Nov (JE), with oth-

ers at two sites each in Missouri and Iowa. A very early Bufflehead hen was at S.C. 1 Sep (LL).

Some 220 Bald Eagles were in a Jones, IA field feeding on carcasses 28 Nov (J. Gilliam). A high count of 14 Northern Harriers was tallied at Owego Wetlands, Woodbury, IA 2 Nov (GV). A kettle of Broad-winged Hawks totaled ca. 1000 in Johnson, IA 19 Sep (CC). Widely scattered Northern Goshawks included 13 in Iowa and 4 in Missouri, the earliest at Swope Park, Jackson, MO 2 Oct (Mark McKellar). Merlins were at 23 sites in Iowa and 12 sites in Missouri, beginning with a record-early Richardson's at Mud L., Buchanan, MO 3 Aug (SK, LL; acc., †Ted Vawter) and one in Polk, IA 31 Aug (†JD).

### GROUSE THROUGH TERNS

Thirty-nine Greater Prairie-Chickens were at Dunn Ranch, Harrison, MO 2 Oct (MR, m.ob.). Northern Bobwhite is becoming scarce in Iowa; the three reports came from the se. quadrant of the state (JF, Ray Cummins). Surveys by Iowa Department of Natural Resources in Aug found none in the n. two-thirds of Iowa, where Gray Partridge was found to be uncommon (DA, RG, WO, CC, Don Robinson, SP). A single Yellow Rail at Cumming wetlands, Warren, IA 28 Sep provided the only report (†JG). A King Rail was at Clarence Cannon N.W.R., Pike, MO 21 Aug (JU). Common Moorhen broods were reported in Aug from Clinton, IA (Bill Scheible), Guthrie, IA (JC), Story, IA (SP), and Little Creve Coeur Marsh, St. Louis, MO 26 Aug (Torrey Berger). Sandhill Cranes included 125 over Walch W.A., Cerro Gordo, IA, the 2nd largest count in recent years (Bruce Marzinske, *vide* PH), and 22 at Sheridan, Worth, MO 6 Nov (DE).

Shorebird migration was generally disappointing in Missouri, but thousands of shorebirds were at Union Slough N.W.R., Kossuth, IA in late Aug–early Sep, and at Red Rock Res., Marion, IA and Hawkeye W.A., Johnson, IA in late Sep–early Oct. A record-late Semipalmated Plover was at R.E.D.A. 8 Nov (JU). There was a Piping Plover at Jester Park, Polk, IA 26 Aug (JB, JG) and at total of 5 at four sites in Missouri. A Black-necked Stilt at Runnells W.A., Marion, IA 28 Aug provided the 2nd fall record (AaB), and an exceptionally high count of 150+ was made at Otter Slough C.A., Stoddard, MO

25 Aug (Neal Young). The 560 Lesser Yellowlegs at Union Slough N.W.R., Kossuth, IA was the largest fall concentration since 1991 (PH). A Solitary Sandpiper in Linn, IA 20 Oct was record late (†TK, JF, CC). A Marbled Godwit at Saylorville 20 Aug (JD) may have been the same bird as the one at Runnells W.A., Marion, IA 25 Aug. A Ruddy Turnstone lingered near Ottumwa, Wapello, IA 31 Oct (†Tom Johnson, ph. JG). Three Red Knots at Hawkeye W.A., Johnson, IA 22 Aug made the species' 6th



Discovered by Dave Becher, Missouri's first Black Skimmer appeared at Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area, St. Charles County, for a single day, 25 September 2004—the same day one was discovered in Madison County, Illinois. Photograph by Joshua P. Uffman.

consecutive fall appearance in the Region (JF, acc., †MD). A White-rumped Sandpiper was in Linn, IA 20 Oct (†CC, TK). A record-high 77 Baird's Sandpipers were at Union Slough N.W.R., Kossuth, IA 29 Aug (MK). The first Buff-breasted Sandpiper was a single at Saylorville 28 Jul (JD; see *Iowa Bird Life* 74: 136–150). A Long-billed Dowitcher lingered at Dewey's Pasture, Clay, IA 20 Nov (LS). A record-high count of 250+ Wilson's Snipe came from Pershing S.P., Linn, MO 16 Nov (SK).

A highlight of this season was the first Missouri record Black Skimmer (acc.), at R.E.D.A. 25 Sep (acc., †Dave Becher, ph. JU, m.ob.). It was another great fall for gulls, with 11 species in Iowa. A second-winter Laughing Gull was at R.E.D.A. 3 Oct (Jim Malone). A spectacular flight of 16,000 Franklin's Gulls was over Hitchcock and L. Manawa, Pottawattamie, IA 4 Oct (Loren & Babs Padelford, MO). A Black-headed Gull at Spirit L., Dickinson, IA, now an annual visitor, appeared 26 Sep (LS, †JG, †JB, †DCh). A high of 1000+ Bonaparte's Gulls was below Bagnell Dam, Miller, MO 27 Nov (DE, JE). A problematic black-backed gull found 10 Sep (KM) at S.R.

and later collected was tentatively identified as a Lesser Black-backed Gull (\*, *vide* MR), although its appearance was similar to that of Kelp Gull. Great Black-backed Gulls were at Pool #13, Mississippi R., Clinton, IA 27 Oct–20 Nov (Paul Van Nieuwenhuysse, DP) and over Hitchcock 31 Oct (MO). Single Sabine's Gulls were at Saylorville 14–15 Oct (AaB, CC, JG), and S.R. 16 Sep (†KM, m.ob.). A juv. Black-legged Kittiwake, rare away from the St. Louis area, was below Bagnell Dam, Miller, MO 27–29 Nov (KM, JE, acc., †DE). A Forster's Tern at Winfield Dam, Lincoln, MO 31 Oct furnished a late Missouri record (BR), though there is one later (Nov) record. A rare n. Missouri Least Tern was at T.R.W. 27 Aug (SK).

### DOVES THROUGH WRENS

Eurasian Collared-Doves were reported in 10 Iowa and four Missouri counties. A White-winged Dove appeared at a feeder in Maryville, Nodaway, MO 26 Nov (acc., †Peter Kondrashov). A Groove-billed Ani was near Ottumwa, Wapello, IA 20–24 Oct (†Corey Holden, †AaB, †CE, †MD, †Robert Dick). Two female Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were in Columbia, Boone, MO 23 & 27

Oct (Bill Goodge). Five Rufous Hummingbirds were banded in e. Missouri at four sites. Twenty-one Belted Kingfishers were along Current R. from Waymeyer to Big Spring, Carter, MO 9 Oct (MR). A Pileated Woodpecker, rare in nw. Missouri, was seen at the Yacht Club, St. Joseph, Buchanan 29 Sep (LL).

Later Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were at Big Oak Tree S.P., Mississippi, MO 22 Sep (JE) and T.G.P. 3 Oct, the latter tied for next-latest fall record (BR). An Acadian Flycatcher at Weston Bend S.P., Platte, MO 13 Sep was record late (MR), while an Alder Flycatcher at Bob Brown C.A., Holt, MO 10 Aug provided the earliest fall record (MR). A Say's Phoebe at Chillicothe, Livingston, MO 6 Sep furnished the 8th state record (acc., †SK, MC). Even more exciting for Missouri birders was the state's first Tropical Kingbird at Sunshine L., Ray 30 Oct (acc., †KM). Its diagnostic calls were recorded 9 Nov (†MR, †Arpad Nyari), and the bird was last seen 10 Nov. This fits the species' pattern of vagrancy along the Pacific Coast. A Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Cherokee, IA 6 Nov was record late (†Bob Lundquist, *vide* Dick Bierman).

The Northern Shrike influx in Iowa began 17–18 Oct in Polk and Buena Vista (AJ, AaB, LS), but the sole Missouri bird was located one km w. of Skidmore, Nodaway 2 Nov (Kirby Goslee). Three Black-billed Magpies were at Broken Kettle Grasslands, Woodbury, IA 30 Nov (GV). Blue Jays and American Crows were "back to normal" in the St. Louis area after the West Nile virus outbreak in 2002 (Mike Thelen). Late Fish Crows in Missouri includ-

Several high counts at Iowa hawkwatch sites were recorded this season. At Hitchcock, record-high counts were tallied for Osprey (184), Bald Eagle (947), Northern Harrier (344), Sharp-shinned Hawk (1086), Cooper's Hawk (273), and Swainson's Hawk (2230) (MO). In addition, a record-late Mississippi Kite was seen 10 Oct (MO). Two accidental species in Iowa were also documented at this site: single juv. Ferruginous Hawks 19 Sep and 23 Nov and a Gyrfalcon 25 Oct (†MO). At Grammar, the 2nd highest season total for Osprey (33) was tallied (BP). The highest daily count of Sharp-shinned Hawk at the site was 151 on 23 Oct (BP).

ed 3 at Montrose C.A., Henry 5 Oct and one on Current R. near Van Buren, Carter 9 Oct (MR). The swallow roost at Locust Creek Bottoms, Linn/Chariton, MO, largely of Tree Swallows, held hundreds of thousands mid-Sep–mid-Oct (SK). Another high count of Tree Swallows was 5000+ in the St. Louis, MO area 9 Oct (BR). There were abundant Red-breasted Nuthatch reports in both states, beginning with one at Chillicothe, MO 6 Sep (KM et al.). The high count was of 18 at Kent Park, Johnson, IA during the I.O.U. Fall Meeting 26 Sep, and numbers dropped off toward the end of the season in Missouri (BE). Two Bewick's Wrens in St. Joseph, Buchanan, MO 1–12 Aug were outside their main range (LL).

### KINGLETS THROUGH FINCHES

Ruby-crowned Kinglets were plentiful in Iowa, with a high count of 65 at Brookside Park, Story 12 Oct (SP). Townsend's Solitaires were record early in Iowa: in Pottawattamie 10 Sep and Clay 12 Sep (*fide* PH). Late Wood Thrushes included one at Mingo N.W.R., Stoddard 25 Oct (Bob Lewis). A Varied Thrush, found dead in Hamilton, IA 6 Oct was record-early (JD, \*Iowa State University). A record-high count of 250+ American Pipits was at a sod farm off Keeteman Rd., Lincoln, MO 30 Oct (JU). A flock of 7 Bohemian Waxwings was in Dickinson, IA 21–28 Nov (ph. ET).

Several observers in both states commented on the poor warbler migration this fall, and we have few high counts or concentrations to report, though Black-throated Green Warblers peaked at 37 on 29 Sep and 51 on 2 Oct at T.G.P. (JE), both excellent totals. One of the most reported warblers in Iowa was Canada Warbler, with 24 reports of 45 birds, including 8 at Parker's Woods, Cerro Gordo 23 Aug (RG), a respectable count. Perhaps connected to the warm weather of mid-autumn, there were many noteworthy reports of late or lingering warblers. A Blue-winged Warbler at Hickory Hill Park, Johnson, IA 26 Sep tied the state's record-late date (DP). A very late Tennessee Warbler was in the Soulard area, St. Louis 21 Nov (SM). A Northern Parula in Cerro Gordo, IA 24 Oct was late, but there is one later state record (ph. PH). It was also a good year for late Yellow-throated Warblers, with 2 at Winfield Dam, Lincoln, MO 9 Oct (JE; 3rd latest fall record) and one at Big Spring, Carter, MO 10 Oct (MR; second-latest fall record). A Prairie Warbler at Lafayette Park, St. Louis 27 Sep provided the latest fall record for Missouri (Mark Mittleman). An ad. Blackpoll Warbler near Clear Lake, Cerro Gordo, IA 9 Oct was nearly the latest on record (PH), while 4 late Prothonotary Warblers were at Big Oak Tree S.P., Mississippi, MO 22 Sep (JE). A Northern Waterthrush at Van Buren, Carter, MO 9 Oct was the second-latest ever (MR). A juv. Hooded Warbler along Skunk R., Story, IA 6 Sep tied the latest date (KP). Record-early by a day was the Chestnut-sided Warbler at Little Creve

Coeur L., St. Louis, MO 15 Aug (Mike Brady). Wayward Pine Warblers appeared in w. Iowa—one in Dickinson 28 Sep (DCh) and 2 in Kosuth 29 Sep (MK).

Sparrow migration was mediocre in most areas, with few spectacular numbers or record dates. The 7 Lapland Longspurs at Dunn Ranch, Harrison, MO 2 Oct constituted the state's earliest record (MR); a flock of 600 in Hamilton, IA was the largest reported (SP, KP). The sole Missouri sighting of Smith's Longspur was a small flock at Pawnee Prairie C.A., Harrison 7 Nov (SK), and the species was recorded at three n. Iowa sites. It was a great year for Blue Grosbeak in n. Missouri, where it is rare: single ad. males were at L. Contrary, Buchanan 3 Aug (SK, LL, Ted Vawter), at T.R.W. 6 Aug (SK), and near Farley, Platte 14 Aug (KM), and 2 imms. or females were in Morgan 26 Sep (MR). A late Blue Grosbeak was at Springfield, Greene, MO 3 Oct (Dean Rising), while a late Dickcissel appeared at a feeder in the Soulard area, St. Louis 22 Nov (SM).

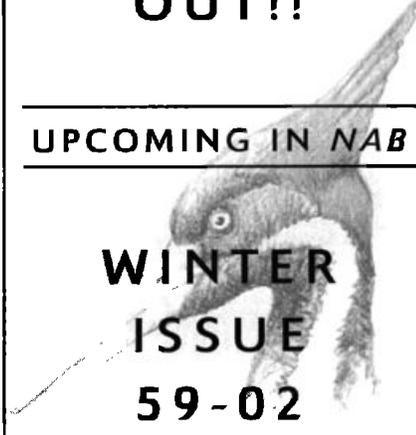
A flock of 12 Bobolinks near Prairie Slough C.A., Lincoln, MO 9 Oct tied the late date (JE). The Rusty Blackbird at Dunn Ranch, Harrison, MO 2 Oct was the second-earliest recorded in fall (MR), and about 1000 were at Hitchcock 22 Nov (MO). There were more sightings of Purple Finch this fall than in recent memory in both states. Red Crossbills appeared at two Missouri and five Iowa sites, and 8 White-winged Crossbills were at Lake Park Cemetery, Dickinson, IA 7 Nov (LS). Pine Siskins were widespread early in Missouri, the first reported being 10 at Taberville Prairie C.A., St. Clair, MO 2 Oct (DW, KM). Among the 32 reports from Iowa were 40 birds at L. Meyer, Wineshiek 29 Nov (Larry Reis, *fide* DeC). By Nov, however, they had become quite scarce (MR, BE). Snow Buntings were seen first at Saylorville 3 Nov (Darwin Koenig), with 50 present 18 Nov (Richard Trieff).

**Undocumented rarities:** Iowa had undocumented reports of Parasitic Jaeger (accidental), Laughing Gull (casual), and Black-legged Kittiwake (casual). If documented and accepted, these will be published herein in a subsequent report.

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