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The Region experienced a tale of two winters. Despite a cold start to the season, December and January were two of the mildest on record. The average high temperatures in Bloomington, IN during December and January were 60° and 58° F, respectively. By contrast, the average temperature in the Region through February was close to 10° F below normal, and there was a three-week stretch beginning 28 January and ending 18 February during which the temperature moved above the freezing mark on only a few occasions. Chicago's average temperature during this stretch was 13.8° F below normal, and Ft. Wayne experienced eight consecutive days of subzero temperatures in February, breaking the old record of six. This cold snap resulted in the freezing of virtually all bodies of water away from Lake Michigan.

Perhaps as the result of the prolonged high temperatures through much of the season or of increased observer effort (or a combination of the two), many species that are very rarely recorded in the winter, particularly in January, were reported this season. This list included American Bittern, King Rail, Sora, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, House and Sedge Wrens, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, Dickcissel, and Indigo Bunting. Rarities included Gyrfalcon, Prairie Falcon, Black-headed Gull, Burrowing Owl, and Say's Phoebe. Also of note was the presence in southeastern Indiana of a Bullock's Oriole and, more significantly, an Audubon's Oriole, both of which would constitute first state records if accepted.

**Abbreviations:** Arklands (Arklands Reclamation Area, Perry, IL); Bev. Sh. (Beverly Shores, Porter, IN); Carl. L. (Carlyle L., s. IL); F.W.A. (Fish & Wildlife Area); G.P.F.W.A. (Goose Pond F.W.A., Greene, IN); Hawthorn

(Hawthorn Mine, Sullivan, IN); Horseshoe L. (Madison, IL); I.B.S.P. (Illinois Beach S.P., Lake, IL); Mich. City (Michigan City Harbor, La Porte, IN); Rend L. (Jefferson and Franklin, IL).

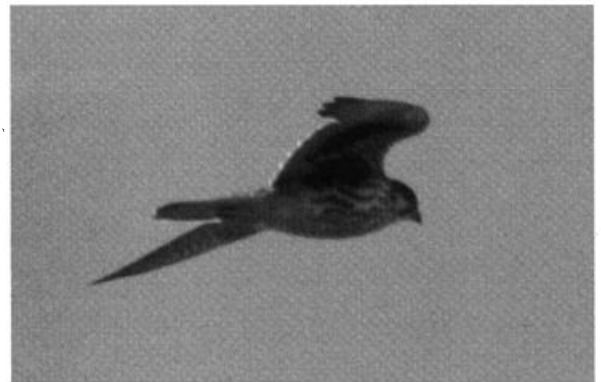
## WATERFOWL THROUGH GALLIFORMS

Illinois again hosted large numbers of wintering Greater White-fronted Geese, with exceptional totals of 7900 at Hennepin-Hopper Lake Restoration Area, Putnam 9 Jan (DFS) and 6094 at Chautauqua N.W.R., Mason 11 Jan (R&SB). Large numbers of Snow Geese were present in s. Illinois; notable totals included 300,000 at Arklands 25 Dec (KJM) and 210,000 at Carl. L. 2 Jan (KAM, CJL). Indiana also had its 2nd highest count of Snow Geese (25,000) in Knox 25 Feb (G&LB). Although the count of 25 Ross's Geese at Arklands 25 Dec (KJM) provided one of Illinois's top five wintering totals, it was still reduced from last year's incredible numbers. Good numbers of Cackling Geese were recorded in Illinois, led by 500 in Woodford 1 Dec (MF) and five other triple-digit tallies. Swans were very evident in the Region. The usual stronghold for Mute Swans was again the L. Calumet area in Chicago, with 137 there 10 Feb (WJM). A record Illinois winter high count of Trumpeter Swans was set 13 Jan, with 30 in Jackson (RSR et al.). Tundra Swan numbers were also high, with peak counts of 521 along the Mississippi R. in Carroll 19 Dec (KJM et al.) and 103 at Kankakee F.W.A., Starke, IN 3 Dec (RH).

Though the 6255 Gadwalls seen 25 Dec at Arklands (KJM) reflected a good season for the species, dabblers otherwise occurred in reduced numbers in the Region. Seasonal high counts were low for American Wigeon, with a peak of 181 at Rend L. 16 Dec (KAM), and American Black Duck, with 61 at Chautauqua N.W.R., Mason, IL 23 Dec (R&SB). Four Blue-winged Teal in the Region was typical, with one at Pine Creek, Benton, IN 2 Dec (EMH), one lingering through 10 Dec at Horseshoe L. (FRH), and 2 in Franklin, IL 13 Jan (JA, TM). Other dabblers showing reduced seasonal highs were as follows: Northern Shoveler with 85 and Northern Pintail with 1507, both at Crab Orchard N.W.R., Williamson, IL 17 Dec (KAM, DMK), and Green-winged Teal with only 120 at Carl. L. 25 Feb (DMK).

While Canvasback numbers were some-

what reduced in the Region, with a peak of only 600 at Carl. L. 25 Feb (DMK), diving ducks in general were present in strong numbers. Notable totals included 324 Redheads and 7598 Greater Scaup on L. Michigan off Lake Forest, IL 30 Dec (GAW, SJH), and nice counts of 12,000 Ring-necked Ducks and 3100 Lesser Scaup at Arklands 25 Dec (KJM). Two Harlequin Ducks flew eastward past Mich. City 16 Dec (KJB, JKC, JJM, PBG), and 2 males in Chicago 25 Dec (SJH) were joined by a female, all 3 lingering through at least 28 Feb (m.ob.). A total of 40 Surf Scoters was recorded in the Region, 13 of which were at inland sites. The largest groups consisted of 11 at Dunes S.P., Porter, IN 2 Dec (JJM) and 5 at Heidecke L., Grundy, IL 7 Jan (AFS). Among several White-winged Scoters at the lakefront was a female at Hammond 20 Jan (KJB, SRB, JKC, LP et al.). Inland birds in Indiana included one at Pine Creek, Benton 2 Dec (EMH), another on L. Maxinkuckee, Marshall 5 Dec (MH), and a female/imm. on the Ohio R. in Clark 14 Feb (BPB). Small numbers of Black Scoters were also seen along the lakefront, including 2 at I.B.S.P. 23 Dec (RDH) and a female at Whiting 20 & 27 Jan (SRB, JKC et al.). A rare inland report was of a female at Eagle Creek Park, Marion, IN 1 Dec (LP). The peak Long-tailed Duck count was of 25 at I.B.S.P. 23 Dec (RDH), and among three Indiana records was a female on the Ohio R. 19 & 24 Dec (T&CB, BPB) that furnished the first record for Clark. An excellent tally of 6009 Common Goldeneyes was



Indiana's first documented Prairie Falcon was at Hawthorn Mine, Sullivan County sporadically throughout the winter (here 16 December 2006) and was seen by many. Photograph by Timothy Avery.

made 16 Dec at Rend L. (DMK). Red-breasted Mergansers posted a strong showing, with 1120 counted 22 Jan in Chicago (DFS), while numbers of Common Mergansers remained low, as they were last winter, with 1020 in Chicago 1 Feb (DFS) being the highest total.

A count of 67 Greater Prairie-Chickens was made at Prairie Ridge State Natural Area,



Discovered on 23 (here 28) February 2007 at Chicago's Montrose Harbor, this Black-headed Gull stayed well past the end of the season, allowing many people to see it. Photograph by Greg Neise.

Jasper, IL 16 Feb (RES, SAS). Wild Turkeys continue to do well in the Region: counts of 190 at Hawthorn 20 Dec (D&BW et al.) and 110 at Rend L. 16 Dec (DMK) were the highest of the season. Northern Bobwhites, however, remain scarce. A peak tally of 20 birds 30 Dec in Union, IL (VMK, KJM, BT, DFS) was one of only three double-digit tallies reported.

## LOONS THROUGH HERONS

The Region's highest-ever count of Red-throated Loons—24, including at least 18 ads.—was logged at Mich. City 16 Dec (JKC, JJM). Illinois's high count of 7 was set 1 Jan at I.B.S.P. (EWW). The lone Pacific Loon report from the Region consisted of one 22 Jan at Horseshoe L. (JPZ, FRH). Single Red-necked Grebes were observed in Indiana at Hursh-town Res., Allen 10 Dec (JAH), at Miller Beach, Lake 10 Dec (JJM), on L. Monroe 15 Dec (JDH), and on Morse Res., Hamilton 3 & 13 Jan (KW). A fine total of 5 Eared Grebes was reported, with singles at Summit L., Henry, IN 2 Dec (SAP), in Adams, IL 16 Dec (AGD), at Arklands 25 Dec (KJM), on L. Lemon, Monroe 3 Jan (J&SH), and at Burns Ditch, Porter 16 Feb (MB), the latter two records representing Indiana's first for Jan and Feb. A Western Grebe at Bev. Sh., likely the same bird that was present in the fall, was seen 6 & 13 Jan (KJB, JKC, SRB, EMH et al.). Another Western Grebe, the first for L. Monroe, IN, was found 25 Jan (DRW) and remained through 3 Feb (m.ob.). Approximate-

ly 600 American White Pelicans were tallied 6 Jan along the Mississippi R., Madison (JWE). A large congregation of 4025 Double-crested Cormorants was noted 16 Dec at Rend L. (DMK), and small numbers wintered on the Indiana lakefront, continuing the pattern from the past few years.

Two American Bitterns were recorded at G.P.F.W.A. 20 Dec and one, Indiana's first in Jan since 1959, was at that location on the 11th (LWS). Great Egrets in Indiana were

seen in Marion 2 Dec (JRD), at L. Lemon 14 Dec (J&SH), and in La-Grange 17 Dec (GT et al.). Three imm. Black-crowned Night-Herons were at Wolf L., Lake, IN 6 Jan (JKC, KJB, SRB, PK et al.), and singles were at L. Calumet in Chicago 24 Dec (WJM) and at Union County C.A., IL 30 Dec (†KJM).

## HAWKS THROUGH SANDPIPERS

The maximum reported count of Bald Eagles was 600 along the Mississippi R. in Whiteside and Rock Island 17 Feb (DJS). Notably large tallies of 45 and 61 Northern Harriers were logged at Hawthorn 20 Dec (D&BW et al.) and at Arklands 25 Dec (KJM), respectively. Four Northern Goshawks were reported, all imm., with birds at Summit Lake S.P., Henry, IN 2 Dec (SAP), in Lee, IL 22 Dec (KJM), at Hawthorn 3 Jan and 23 Feb (DRW et al.), and in Urbana, IL all winter (RES et al.). Numbers of Golden Eagles in the Region seem to be on the rise, with 15 re-

ported, including 2 at Pere Marquette S.P., Jersey, IL 3 Feb (JWE) and 2 at L. Monroe, IN 1 & 15 Dec (DRW). Winter Merlin numbers seem to be increasing as well, exemplified by 3 birds (perhaps the same individuals) at Hawthorn on both 20 (DG) & 26 Dec (JJM). One of these birds was a pale ad. male, apparently *richardsonii*; another *richardsonii* was at Willow Slough F.W.A., Newton, IN 1 Jan (SRB, KJB, JKC, LH et al.). The most exciting raptor of the season was an ad. gray-morph Gyrfal-



This Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was found on the Lafayette Christmas Bird Count on 17 (here 18) December 2006 and, in subsequent diligent searching of the area by Delano and Kevin Arvin, was found multiple times through 27 December. Photograph by Kevin Arvin.

con seen feeding on a pheasant 3 Feb in Livingston, IL (†DFS, ph. TH). For the 2nd consecutive year, at least one Prairie Falcon wintered at Hawthorn. A probable juv. seen 13 Dec (DRW) was subsequently photographed 16 Dec (IA). An apparent ad. that was very light underneath, with very limited spotting/streaking, was seen 24 Dec (EMH) and subsequently 23 Jan (DRW). These birds would represent the 7th and 8th records for Indiana (p.a.).

A King Rail seen at G.P.F.W.A. 13 (DRW) & 20 Dec (PS) represented only the 3rd winter record for Indiana and the first since 1956. A Virginia Rail was found at Rend L. (KAM) 16 Dec, one was in Bev. Sh. 16 Dec (JKC, JJM) and 13 Jan (KJB, JKC, SRB), and 2 were at Willow Slough, Newton, IN 5 Jan (JBH). A Sora in nw. Monroe 30 Dec (DRW) provided the 2nd Dec record for Indiana and the first since 1900. Three Lesser Yellowlegs in Knox 25 Feb (G&LB) were the earliest ever for Indiana, and a Pectoral Sandpiper at Whitewater S.P., Union (WHB) provided Indiana's first Jan record. Three Least Sandpipers at L. Gibson 20 Jan (G&LB, LWS, JDH) provided Indiana's 5th Jan record. A first-basic Purple Sandpiper in Chicago 19 Dec (RDH) was joined by another 22 Dec (TBL), and one was in Waukegan 19 Dec–13 Jan (MAM, m.ob.). An American Woodcock "peenting" in nw. Monroe 30 Dec (DRW) and another in Hawthorn 2 Jan (DG) furnished Indiana's 6th Dec and Jan records, respectively.

## GULLS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

An imm. Laughing Gull found 1 Jan at I.B.S.P. (ph. PWS, RB, ph., †GAW, MH, ph. EWW) provided the first Jan record for Illinois. An ad. Laughing Gull at L. Gibson that was present since Nov (*vide* GB) was seen 9 Dec (JK, BB), 1 Jan (DAY, BF, CEM), and 24 Feb (BPB, LWS, JDH), and another at L. Lemon, Brown 28 Jan (J&SH), together with the L. Gibson bird, provided Indiana's 6th and 7th winter records. The highlight for winter gulling came at season's end when an ad. Black-headed Gull was found 23 Feb at Montrose Harbor in Chicago by John Hockman and Ann Harness. It was relocated 28 Feb+ and seen by many (ph. KH, RDH, ph., †GAW, †WJM, m.ob.). A very good count of 6000 Bonaparte's Gulls was tallied 1 & 3 Dec at Carl. L. (DMK). An ad. California Gull was seen 4, 6, & 16 Feb in East Alton, IL (WCR, FRH, KAM). Herring Gulls occurred in reduced numbers, the largest gathering consisting of only 2200 at Starved Rock S.P., La Salle, IL 24 Feb (DFS). Fifteen Thayer's and 7 Iceland Gulls at Winthrop Harbor, IL 10 Feb (GAW et al.) were notable concentrations. On the Indi-



This American Redstart provided the first confirmed December record for Indiana at Beverly Shores in Porter County (here 2 December 2006). Photograph by John Cassidy.

ana lakefront, where gull numbers continue to drop, an ad. and a third-year Iceland Gull at Hammond Marina 3 Feb (JJM, KJB, JKC) were the only ones reported this season. Similarly, only 5, 2, and 9 Thayer's, Lesser Black-backed, and Glaucous Gulls, respectively, were reported on the Indiana lakefront for the season. An ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull on the Ohio R. near Jeffersonville (ph. BPB) furnished the first record for Clark. A first-year Great Black-backed Gull at L. Gibson 24 Feb (BPB, LWS, JDH) represented only the 5th Indiana record away from the lakefront. In Illinois, 7 Lesser Black-backed (JWE) and 7 Great Black-backed Gulls (WCR) along the Mississippi R. in Madison 11 Feb provided noteworthy counts. Two Black-legged Kittiwakes were seen on L. Michigan at Lake Forest, IL 30 Dec (GAW, SJH), while one stayed at Baldwin L., Randolph, IL 17–20 Feb (PL et al.). An exceptional find was a Forster's Tern at Rend L. on the late date of 16 Dec (†KAM).

More Barn Owls were found in the Region this season than is typical; among the 9 reported were 2 at Arklands 25 Dec (THi, KJM) and 2 at Carl. L. 25 Feb (DMK). Of 5 Snowy Owls reported this season, 4 were in Illinois: one in Livingston 21 Dec–4 Feb (MJW, m.ob.), one 1–2 Jan in Madison (CJL, KAM, FRH) that was killed by a vehicle the day after it was discovered, another in Chicago 22 Jan (ph. PD), and one in DuPage 1–2 Feb (AK et al.); the lone Indiana bird was observed along I-94 in LaPorte 11 Dec (BJG). A Burrowing Owl was again discovered at Pyramid S.P., Perry, IL, where one had been present Aug 2005–Mar

2006. This bird was seen 25 & 28 Dec and 1 Jan (JEM, TUM, DMK, MS). Long-eared Owls were well represented this winter, with a peak count of 11 at Carl. L. 1 Jan (DMK, MS). Several large concentrations of Short-eared Owls included 55 at Hawthorn 2 Jan (LWS), 35 at Peabody King W.A., St. Clair, IL 28 Feb (TUM), and 29 at Ferrin, IL 19 Dec (DMK, SDB). An impressive total of 10 Northern Saw-whet Owls was recorded in Hoosier N.E., Monroe/Jackson 16 Dec (LWS).

Indiana's first Dec record of Ruby-throated Hummingbird was furnished by a Tiptecanoe bird that remained through 4 Dec (DG, RL). The Black-chinned Hummingbird that appeared at a feeder in Gibson, IN in Oct remained through 15 Dec (*vide* DG). No fewer than 5 Rufous Hummingbirds remained in Indiana into the winter period (*vide* DG), with 2 staying into late Jan and another 2 hanging on until 15 Feb, the latter pair including an ad. male in Harrison (T&JS, BPB).

## FLYCATCHERS THROUGH WARBLERS

A dozen Eastern Phoebes were reported in Indiana during the period, including 2 each in Jan and Feb. Remarkably, the 2 Jan birds were both from Allen in ne. Indiana (JAH). A Say's Phoebe wintered at Prairie Ridge State Natural Area, Jasper, IL, being present there 8 Dec–7 Feb (RES, KAM, CJL, m.ob.). There are 12 prior accepted records of this species for Illinois. Loggerhead Shrikes made a good showing this season in s. Illinois, with three reports of more than 2 birds: 5 in Edwards 28

Dec (RES), 4 in *Marion* 22 Feb (RES), and 3 at Carl. L. 19 Dec (KAM, VMK). An impressive 42 Northern Shrikes were reported during the period, among which were relatively southerly birds at *Moraine View S.P., McLean*, IL 18 Dec (AC) and at the *Bluegrass F.W.A., Warrick*, IN 21 Feb (CEM, DAY). Notable was a Fish Crow at *Horseshoe L.* 27 Feb (FRH).

Brown Creepers were abundant in Illinois, the highest tally consisting of 33 at *Milan Bottoms, Rock Island* 28 Dec (BLB). A lingering House Wren 2 Jan at *Horseshoe L.* (FRH) provided a rare winter record, as did a Sedge Wren in *Union*, IL 30 Dec (SDB). More expected, though still unusual, were the scattered Marsh Wrens found throughout the Region, including one at *I.B.S.P.* in the ne. corner of Illinois 1 Jan (EWW), 3 seen by separate parties at *G.P.F.W.A.* 20 Dec, and 2 in nw. *Monroe*, IN 30 Dec (DRW et al.). Indiana's 4th winter Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was seen in *Lafayette* 17 Dec (ph. KA) as well as multiple times subsequently through 27 Dec (KA, DA), the latter date representing the latest sighting ever for the state. Eastern Bluebirds were both more numerous as well as more widespread throughout the Region this winter. Illinois reports included exceptional counts of 199 in *Massac* 31 Dec (KJM et al.) and 134 in *Jackson* 1 Jan (KJM, VL et al.). On the other hand, Hermit Thrushes were less abundant. A female Varied Thrush was in *Rochelle*, IL 24 & 26 Feb (JJ, DTW, DJS). Gray Catbirds lingered 13-22 Dec in *Boone*, IL (AEB) and at *Willow Slough F.W.A., Newton*, IN 5 Jan (JBH).

The winter season provided a nice selection of out-of-season warblers. An Orange-crowned carried 26 Jan-1 Feb in Chicago (†DFS). Six reports totaling 9 Pine Warblers included 4 at *L. Murphysboro S.P., Jackson* 1 Jan (KJM, VL et al.); all sightings were confined to s. Illinois except the northernmost, in *Greene-Sullivan S.F., Greene*, IN 20 Dec (JG, RAB). Indiana's first confirmed (2nd overall) winter record of *American Redstart* was documented at *Bev. Sh.* 2 Dec (ph. JKC, KJB, SRB, JJM, SN). In *Coles*, IL, an Ovenbird remained 8 Dec-6 Feb (RF). An unprecedented 7 Common Yellowthroats were reported in Dec throughout the Region, including 2 in *Boone*, IN on the 17th (SH) and a female at the *Union County C.A.*, IL 30 Dec (KJM).

## SPARROWS THROUGH WEAVER FINCHES

Spotted Towhee reports included singles 6-13 Feb in *Heyworth*, IL (KS) and 10 Feb in *Woodford*, IL (JM). Chipping Sparrows were more prevalent than normal, with 12 reported from nine locations. The 7 Vesper Sparrows reported were well above the average and in-

cluded a bird in *Massac*, IL 31 Dec (KJM, JEM) and one from *Fayette*, IN 11 Feb (WHB). On 20 Dec, 8 Le Conte's Sparrows were recorded at *G.P.F.W.A.*, including 6 by a single group (JC et al.). Four other reports of Le Conte's Sparrows included 3 birds in *Jasper*, IL 15 Dec (RES, CLH). A fine total of 203 Song Sparrows was logged in the *Brookville L.*, IN area 11 Feb (WHB). Four Lincoln's Sparrow reports included birds 3 Dec (KRW) and 7 Dec (JS) in Chicago, 31 Dec at *Mermet L.* (KJM), and 16 Dec in *Hamilton*, IN (JC). A Harris's Sparrow was found in *W. Terre Haute*, IN 16 Dec (SLL), and another that appeared at a feeder in *New Albany*, IN 13 Jan (GD) lingered through 28 Feb+ (m.ob.) The Feb cold snap brought lots of Lapland Longspurs and Snow Buntings into the Region, including 1873 of the former into *Greene*, IN 21 Feb (LWS).

Remarkable was an ad. male Indigo Bunting in full alternate plumage in *Gibson*, IN 17 Dec (ph. CEM). Two other Indigo Buntings were at *Mermet L., Massac*, IL 31 Dec (JEM), and yet another was at *Rend L.* 16 Dec (†KAM). Indiana's 7th Dec record of Dickcissel was furnished by 2 birds at *G.P.F.W.A.* 20 Dec (JC et al.), and its 5th Jan record was represented by one in *Vigo* 17-20 Jan (DP, MRB).

The largest reported blackbird concentrations came from *Rend L.* 16 Dec: 1,080,000 Red-winged Blackbirds (DMK) and 101,325 Common Grackles (KAM). A Great-tailed Grackle was reported but not detailed 22 Jan at *Horseshoe L.* (FRH). More Yellow-headed Blackbirds than usual were evident this winter, with Illinois birds represented by 2 in *Clinton* 10 Feb (DMK, JWE) and single birds 2 Dec in *Winnebago* (MK, DTW) and 4 Feb at *Matthiessen S.P., La Salle* (DJS). The 3rd Jan record of Yellow-headed Blackbird in Indiana was furnished by a first-year male in *Hammond* 31 Jan (ph. JB); it remained for many to see, and an ad. male appeared s. of *Hawthorn* 23 Feb (DRW et al.). An ad. male *Bullock's Oriole* visited the home of *Rose Trabue* in *Austin, Scott*, IN 1 Jan through the end of the period (MT, DG), while in neighboring *Jefferson*, an ad. female *Audubon's Oriole*—for which there are no U.S. records outside of Texas—appeared at a feeder approximately 24 Jan-15 Feb (p.a., B&CS, JL, ph., †DG et al.).

It was a bleak winter finch season in the Region. The 50 Purple Finches located 28 Dec in *Rock Island*, IL (KJM) provided the lone double-digit tally among a reduced number of reports. Just 5 Common Redpolls, all in Illinois, and 6 Pine Siskins were reported. A welcome sight was a flock of 35-40 Evening Grosbeaks in *Bev. Sh.* 16 Dec (AA, MM,

CVW); it represented the first Indiana lakefront record in five years.

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