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# The *Passenger* **PIGEON**



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Send all manuscripts and related correspondence to the Editors. Information for "Seasonal Field Notes" should be sent to the Bird Reports Coordinator (see inside back cover). Art work and questions about the art should be sent to the Assistant Editor for art (see left column). Manuscripts that deal with Wisconsin birds, ornithological topics of interest to WSO members, and WSO activities are considered for publication. For detailed submission guidelines, see pages 131–132 of the Summer 2007 issue (Vol. 69, No. 2) or contact the Editors. As a general guide to style, use issues after Vol. 60, No. 1, 1998.

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*Front Cover: Wisconsin's first Rock Wren was found in Milwaukee County on 30 April 2007 by Steven Lubahn. This portrait was taken by Scott Franke on 1 May 2007.*

## **Expanding Our “Involvement Comfort Zones”: for the Birds’ Sake, the Time is Now**

I’d venture a guess that many, if not most, WSO members initially became interested in birds not as a result of any political beliefs or sense of environmental conviction, but rather due to an interest in and fascination with the beauty and behavior of birds (at least, that’s certainly how it happened for me). This interest in birds helps fuel, in many birders, a growing sense of environmental consciousness and commitment out of the knowledge that birds depend on healthy habitats to survive and flourish, and that the amount and quality of habitats is determined largely through political processes, supported by popular sentiment. As time passes, some birdwatchers become quite passionate and outspoken environmental activists and conservation advocates. If you are willing to humor my gross generalizations a bit further, I am contending that many birders are not *inherently* political beings by nature.

Well, whether my contention is true or not, the fact is that now, perhaps more than any time in history, the birds we love need us to become more involved in the political processes and conservation issues that impact them. Of course, not everyone is comfortable with, or well-suited to, being a full-blown activist. But I encourage each WSO member to consider stretching their personal envelope—their “involvement comfort zone”—a small bit to become more involved than they are today.

Why should WSO members become more involved in the political and conservation arena? Perhaps the main justification is that, because birds can’t act on their own behalf, they need us to do it for them. Many of you will remember the famous 1972 Supreme Court case of *Sierra Club vs. Morton*, in which the plaintiff was trying to block the development of a major ski resort in the Mineral King Valley area of the Sierra Nevada in California. In his written dissent in the case (which was initially decided against the Sierra Club), Justice William O. Douglas famously quoted USC law professor Christopher Stone, who had written a seminal article entitled “*Should Trees have Standing? Toward Legal Rights for Natural Objects.*” Justice Douglas was echoing Stone’s contention that the trees in Mineral King, along with all other natural things, have legal rights—standing—that can be upheld in a court of law. It was the first time the rights of non-human natural organisms had been asserted in the Supreme Court. Stone’s argument stemmed from, and gave voice to, Aldo Leopold’s Land Ethic. Ultimately the issue was settled when Congress added Mineral King Valley to Sequoia National Park in 1978.

Although the outcome of *Sierra Club vs. Morton* was ultimately successful from a conservation perspective, the job of defending wild things, both across the world and here in Wisconsin, is far from over. With human population growth and land use changes ever increasing and putting pressure on bird habitats



across Wisconsin, the need for WSO members to stand up for the birds and the other species and natural communities we love has never been greater. Here is just a sampling of some of the current conservation issues facing bird populations that deserve our attention:

- The federal Farm Bill, the 2007 version of which should have been passed by the time you read this, has enormous impacts on millions of acres of current and potential wildlife habitat. For example, it is this legislation that created the Conservation Reserve Program, setting aside over 700,000 acres of grassland habitat in Wisconsin. This bill also contains an Energy Title, that will impact many thousands of acres of grassland and forest habitats through programs that promote the development of biofuels;
- The wholesale fragmentation of northern forests due to large timber companies realizing that profits can be maximized not by logging, but rather by selling small parcels off for home development and private recreation;
- Continued pressures from various forms of development on valuable wetland habitats;
- Local land use plans that continue to allow for scattered development patterns that result in extensive habitat fragmentation. Many of the land use decisions made across the state occur at small Town Board meetings, where the group of people present determines the outcome.

So, what to do? This is, of course, an entirely personal decision. Increased involvement for one person will mean donating money to Wisconsin conservation causes or writing a letter to an elected official about the Farm Bill or other topics. For others, it may mean donating significant time and energy working for a particular conservation issue or policy. We are lucky at WSO to have on our board an able and active conservation chair, Bill Mueller. Bill often posts on WisBirdNet or writes in the Badger Birder on topics relevant to bird conservation. As a start, consider taking Bill up on one of his suggestions for aiding bird conservation in the state. Similarly, the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI) has an issues committee (chaired by Bill Mueller) that is active on a variety of fronts promoting bird conservation. Log on to the WBCI website <http://www.wisconsinbirds.org/index.htm> to get an idea of what they are up to.

As birders, I feel we WSO members have an obligation to extend our involvement into the conservation and political arena however we can. In doing so, we move from being passive observers to embodying, if even a small bit, the Land Ethic that Leopold wrote about so eloquently. Without doing so, the birds we love may not be around as long as we hope they would be.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "David W. Sample". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent 'D' and 'S'.

President

# **Auditory Surveys for Northern Saw-whet Owls in Southern Wisconsin 1986–2006, with Comparison to Manitoba Owl and Mammal Surveys**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*In annual auditory surveys with tape playback in late winter and early spring at Devil's Lake State Park, Wisconsin, during 1986–2006, the amount of calling by Northern Saw-whet Owls (*Aegolius acadicus*) varied dramatically and regularly in an apparent cycle of 2–7 years (average 4 years). The amount of calling by Long-eared Owls (*Asio otus*), Great Horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus*), Barred Owls (*Strix varia*), and Eastern*

*Screech-Owls (*Megascops asio*) during these auditory surveys also varied among years but not as regularly as for Northern Saw-whet Owl. Northern Saw-whet Owl calling in Wisconsin covaried with the same species' calling in Manitoba, and especially with small mammal abundance in southeastern Manitoba.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Nocturnal and secretive, Northern Saw-whet Owls (*Aegolius acadicus*)

{“Saw-whet Owls”} are predators of small mammals, especially deer mice (*Peromyscus*) in its southern range, voles (*Microtus*, rangewide; *Clethrionomys*, to the north), and shrews (*Blarina*, *Sorex*) (Johnsgard 1988, Robbins 1991, Swengel and Swengel 1992a, Cannings 1993). These owls vocalize primarily during their courtship and early breeding season (late winter to early spring), otherwise remaining nearly mute. Migrant banding studies, especially in fall, indicate that Saw-whet Owls are much more common than sight and sound records indicate. Individuals are hard to see during the day in the dense cover of their roosting sites and few observers frequent this small owl’s forest habitats during its vocal period.

Auditory surveys by imitating owl calls or by tape playback have often been used for nocturnal owls that are otherwise difficult to detect (Fuller and Mosher 1981, Johnson et al. 1981, Smith 1987). Many factors must be considered in designing and interpreting such surveys, including daily and seasonal variability in the species’ tendency to vocalize, type of vocalization to use as the stimulus, and technical aspects of broadcasting. Well-known problems of such auditory surveying concern both supernormal responses to broadcasts and the converse, accommodation (reduced responsiveness) with increasing exposure to the stimulus call, which Eastern Screech-Owls (*Megascops asio*) have been shown to do (Smith et al. 1987). Thus, moderation in frequency and intensity of broadcasts is advised. Auditory surveys of nocturnal owls produce valuable distributional and abundance data, but an understand-

ing of the species’ vocal behavior is necessary for proper interpretation.

Swengel and Swengel (1995, 1997) reported on the first 10–11 years of auditory surveys in southern Wisconsin, with a possible four-year cycle in amount of calling by Saw-whet Owls. By contrast, daytime searches for pellets, roosts, and roosting individuals of Saw-whet Owls in the same areas during the auditory survey season from 1986 to 1990 (Swengel and Swengel 1992a, b) did not indicate any strong patterns of annual variation in owl abundance. Swengel and Swengel (1995, 1997) also reviewed the literature on annual variation in other Saw-whet Owl surveys (providing some corroboration of our observations) and in small rodent prey, especially further north (suggesting a possible factor related to the pattern we reported). Here we report on the pattern of calling by Saw-whet Owls and other owl species on these Wisconsin surveys through 2006. We compare these observations to survey results for the same owls in monitoring programs elsewhere in mid-continent North America. We also correlate the amount of Saw-whet Owl calling in Wisconsin to abundance of small mammals in southeastern Manitoba.

## METHODS

**Wisconsin sites and surveys**—Each year during 1986–2006, Scott and Ann Swengel conducted auditory surveys for Saw-whet Owls at two study areas in Devil’s Lake State Park in the Baraboo Hills, Sauk County, in southwestern Wisconsin (43°24′ to 43°26′ N, 89°42′ to 89°46.5′ W). The South Shore Road (SS) traverses rugged ter-

rain with deciduous and deciduous-coniferous forests and some open areas. The Steinke Basin (ST) contains wet meadow and grassland with scattered pine plantations and oak-pine forest on the perimeter. Surveys occurred at a third site (Baxter's Hollow) near the state park, but only during 1986–1997, so this site is excluded from analysis here. The study areas and survey methods are described in more detail in Swengel and Swengel (1987, 1992b).

Cannings (1993) mapped these study areas within but at the southern edge of the Saw-whet Owl's year-round range, but noted that the limits of its breeding and wintering ranges are not accurately known and likely vary annually. This uncertainty and variability result in somewhat different maps for this owl's range. In Robbins (1991), the study areas are on the northern edge of the winter range. Several Saw-whet Owl breeding records and summer detections exist for Sauk County and environs, as reviewed in Swengel (1987), summarized by Robbins (1991), and mapped in Swengel (2006). But most Saw-whet Owl records from southern Wisconsin occur in the winter and early spring (Swengel 1987). Since the timing of spring migration and breeding overlap (Cannings 1993, Harriman 2007), it is difficult to determine how many individuals are wintering, migratory, or resident.

Fixed listening stations (stops) were spaced 100 m apart along walking routes at SS and ST. The full length of these routes totaled 12 km, but in most years (including 1994–2006), 10 km were surveyed. At each station in 1986 and most of 1987, then at alternate stations through 2006, we played

20 sec of taped Saw-whet Owl song (the series of single, short, high-pitched notes repeated at consistent intervals) from "Voices of New World Nightbirds" (ARA Records, Inc.) with a cassette player, paused 1 min to listen, played another 20 sec of song, and paused again 1 min to listen. All surveys were conducted by Scott and Ann Swengel together and occurred on evenings after sunset with wind <16 km/hr and little or no precipitation. Each station was surveyed up to twice per year, with the two surveys spaced 2 weeks apart to minimize owls' accommodation to taped call.

During the entire study, the first survey period occurred between 10 February and 27 March and the second between 24 February and 27 April, but within a year, the two survey periods did not overlap (Table 1). Surveys occurred on a minimum of three evenings/yr, with the temperature in the first survey period varying from  $-24$  to  $+7^{\circ}\text{C}$  and in the second from  $-15$  to  $+24^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Surveys occurred slightly earlier in later years to avoid the earlier change to daylight savings time, which forced surveys to be inconveniently late in the day relative to our daytime schedules. During 1986–93, it varied as to how much of the routes could be surveyed in each period because of weather, time, and health constraints. However many stations were sampled in those years, all were in the same general area and habitat. In 1991, the little surveying possible occurred only in prime Saw-whet Owl habitat. During 1994–2006, the same stations were surveyed in both survey periods each year. Ten stations were surveyed every year of the study in the first survey period, including in 1991.

Table 1. Survey 1 and Survey 2 dates (MDD) and number (N) of listening stations surveyed at Devil’s Lake South Shore Road (SS) and Steinke Basin (ST), Wisconsin. Survey 2 in 1991 contains only one station. “Alternate survey” (Alt.) consists of one sampling of each station per year from either survey 1 or survey 2, whichever resulted in the smallest span of dates for all years combined. Not shown separately in this table: “Alternate survey of same stations” is limited to SS, with N=27 stations except for 10 in 1991 and 13 in 1992. The only sample with no missing values in any year is “same ten stations” on survey 1 at SS.

Survey 1-SS			Survey 1-ST		Survey 2-SS		Survey 2-ST		Alt.-SS.	Alt.-ST
	Dates	N	Date	N	Dates	N	Dates	N	Dates	Date
1986	309–316	75	327	3	328–422	19	411–427	5	309–316	327
1987	307–320	70	305	16	402–403	44	404	16	307–320	305
1988	302–304	31	309	14	330–411	12	–	–	302–304	309
1989	307–310	33	–	–	402–405	18	402–412	10	307–310	–
1990	228–321	41	309	6	323–403	41	326	6	228–321	309
1991	223–225	15	–	–	405	1	–	–	223–225	–
1992	214–216	18	213	6	327–403	19	403	6	214–216	213
1993	214–302	32	226	6	305–323	32	326	6	219–305	226
1994	311–313	32	312	7	325–330	32	328	7	311–313	312
1995	216–224	32	219	7	302–317	32	303	7	219–302	219
1996	215–224	32	225	7	309–313	32	314	7	309–313	225
1997	223–227	32	303	7	311–320	32	322	7	223–227	303
1998	221–222	32	223	7	401–402	32	321	7	221–222	223
1999	213–215	32	217	7	301–307	32	322	7	301–307	217
2000	211–220	32	222	7	302–309	32	310	7	309–309	310
2001	210–211	32	211	7	303–317	32	311	7	303–317	311
2002	217–222	32	222	7	305–311	32	311	7	305–311	311
2003	210–212	32	212	7	225–226	32	226	7	225–226	226
2004	210–211	32	211	7	224–225	32	225	7	224–225	225
2005	210–211	32	211	7	224–225	32	225	7	224–225	225
2006	210–211	32	211	7	224–225	32	226	7	224–225	226
Range	210–321		211–327		224–422		225–427		214–321	213–327

At each station for each owl species heard, the type and direction of each call made by each contact (vocalizing individual) were tallied in three time slots: before first tape playback and during/after each of the two tape playbacks. The duration of listening prior to the first tape playback was momentary immediately upon arrival at the station, only sufficient to determine whether an owl was calling prior to turning on the tape recorder. Owls heard in transit between stations were attributed to whichever station seemed most appropriate, given the location and timing of the detection. The number of contacts in each time slot was then summed for each species

at each station. For this analysis, we did not distinguish whether the same or different owl individual(s) were calling in subsequent time slots at the same station. That is, if the same individual Saw-whet Owl called continuously throughout all three time slots at a station, or if a different individual called in each time slot, we totaled three contacts. Thus, the number of contacts per station is an index of the amount of calling heard, not the number of owls responsible for this calling. Indexing auditory results per station rather than using putative number of owls responsible for the calling has been recommended by other owl re-

searchers (per English summary in Holmberg 1979).

**Statistical analyses**—In our analyses, we tried different approaches to the tradeoff in sample size vs. variable control (Table 1). A larger sample of stations contained more variation in date and number of stations among years. But limiting the sample to a set number and location of stations (with few or no missing values among years) reduced sample size. The largest samples contained all stations in survey 1 and/or survey 2 per year. For 1994–2006, no variation in number and location of stations occurred and timing of survey 1 and survey 2 varied less than in 1986–93. For the “alternate survey,” we selected one sampling of each station per year from either survey 1 or survey 2, whichever resulted in the smallest span of dates for all years combined. In the sample of “alternate survey of same stations,” we restricted the data from the alternate survey to the same stations at SS (with some missing values only in 1991 and 1992). The only sample with no missing values in any year is the sample for “same ten stations” on survey 1 at SS.

Analysis was done with ABstat 7.20 software (1994, Anderson-Bell Corp., Parker, Colorado), with statistical significance set at  $P < 0.05$ . In sets of related tests where any significance occurred, significance usually occurred at a rate much higher than the 5% expected due to chance (Type I statistical errors). As a result, we did not lower the  $P$  value further, as many more Type II errors (biologically significant yet statistically non-significant results) would then be created than Type I errors eliminated. Where sig-

nificance occurred in a set of tests only at the rate expected due to Type I errors, these results should be viewed as possibly spurious.

We used the Mann-Whitney U test to test for significant differences in amount of calling by each species between consecutive years. Since we did little surveying in 1991, we also tested 1990 vs. 1992. We used the same test to compare amount of calling in survey 1 vs. survey 2, and to determine the effect of calling by large owls (Great Horned [*Bubo virginianus*] and Barred [*Strix varia*]) on calling by small owls (Saw-whet and Eastern Screech) immediately afterward. For that, we compared the amount of calling by each small owl species after the second tape playback by whether any large owl had called previously at the same station (i.e., before and/or after the first tape playback).

We used the Spearman rank correlation for all correlations. Within species, we correlated different ways of calculating annual calling indices (mean number of contacts per listening station per year) in pair-wise correlations of different samples of stations: surveys 1 and 2 combined, alternate survey, and alternate survey same stations, and for Saw-whet Owl only, survey 1, survey 2, and same ten stations. To test whether the different owl species showed similar patterns of calling, we correlated the annual calling indices on surveys 1 and 2 each year for all pairings of analyzable species. To test for a long-term trend in amount of calling by any analyzable owl species, we correlated the annual calling indices with year. We correlated the calling indices between survey 1 and survey 2 (excluding 1991

Table 2. Spearman rank correlation coefficients ( $r$ ) of annual calling indices in Wisconsin for surveys 1 and 2 combined vs. alternate survey and alternate survey same stations (see Table 1).  $N=21$  years for all.

Surveys 1 and 2 vs.:	Alternate survey		Alternate survey same stations	
	$r$	$P$	$r$	$P$
No. Saw-whet Owl	+0.967	<0.0001	+0.926	<0.0001
Great Horned Owl	+0.652	<0.01	+0.486	<0.05
Barred Owl	+0.497	<0.05	+0.577	<0.01
Eastern Screech-Owl	+0.781	<0.001	+0.765	<0.001

because too few stations were sampled).

We compared the annual calling indices from Devil's Lake State Park, Wisconsin, with annual indices for the same species in other volunteer monitoring surveys in mid-continent North America: Manitoba (>770 km from Devil's Lake) during 1991–2005 (Duncan and Duncan 1997, Duncan 2006) and Minnesota (477–554 km from Devil's Lake) in 1992–94, 1998, and 2000–02 (Vora 2006). Since the volunteer nocturnal survey program in Manitoba used 20 sec tape playback of a male Boreal Owl (*Aegolius funereus*) and 20 sec tape playback of a male Great Gray Owl (*Strix nebulosa*) during 1991–99 but no playback during 2000–05, we ranked the Manitoba indices separately for each period. It was not possible to correlate the Manitoba and Minnesota surveys because the latter had too few years in common with either period of the Manitoba survey.

The owl calling indices from Manitoba and Wisconsin were then correlated with small mammal census results from southeastern Manitoba obtained annually by James Duncan in 1986–2006. The study sites and locations are described in Duncan (1987). The mammal indices are expressed as number trapped per number of trap

nights per year. We tested two hypotheses: that owl calling (in Manitoba and Wisconsin) might statistically relate to the same year's mammal indices and/or to last year's mammal indices.

## RESULTS

**Wisconsin surveys**—On surveys 1 and 2 at Devil's Lake State Park, Wisconsin during 1986–2006, 645 contacts were heard for Northern Saw-whet Owl, 151 for Great Horned Owl, 283 for Barred Owl, and 93 for Eastern Screech-Owl. Saw-whet Owl and Barred Owl were heard in all years, but no Great Horned Owls called in 1991 and 1994 and no Eastern Screech-Owls in 1989–90, 1992, and 1997. The 14 contacts for Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*) occurred in 1997–2002 and 2006.

Since we calculated annual calling indices in several different ways (either to increase sample size or increase variable control), we tested how well these different indices correlated within owl species. For both Saw-whet Owl and Eastern Screech-Owl, the different indices covaried strongly (Table 2). The other two owls species had weaker positive correlations that were nonetheless significant. For Saw-

Table 3. Spearman rank correlation coefficients ( $r$ ) of Saw-whet Owl annual calling indices in Wisconsin (see Table 1 for explanation of these samples).  $N=21$  years except  $N=20$  for tests including survey 2 (which excluded 1991).

	$r$	$P$
Survey 1 to:		
Survey 2	+0.859	<0.001
Alternate survey	+0.915	<0.0001
Survey 2 to:		
Alternate survey	+0.938	<0.001
Alternate survey same stations to:		
Survey 1	+0.869	<0.001
Survey 2	+0.912	<0.001
Surveys 1 and 2	+0.963	<0.0001
Alternate survey	+0.971	<0.0001
Same ten stations each year	+0.804	<0.001

whet Owl, we tested additional samples of stations for calculating indices. All of these covaried strongly (Table 3).

Regardless of index (Fig. 1), Saw-whet Owls peaked in 1986, 1990, 1994, 2001, 2004, and 2006. These peaks occurred every 2–7 years (average 4 years). Conversely, low points oc-

curred in 1987–89, 1992–93, 1996–97, 2002–03 (but higher than all the other low points), and 2005. Thus, low points happened every 3–6 years.

The amount of Saw-whet Owl calling on surveys 1 and 2 significantly changed between 9 of the 21 year-pairs tested: 1986–87, 1989–90, 1990–92, 1993–94, 1994–95, 2001–02, 2003–04, 2004–05, 2005–06. The change in 2000–01 was near significant ( $P<0.06$ ). These tests indicated that 1986, 1990, 1994, 2001, 2004, and 2006 were significantly high years and 1987–89, 1992–93, 1995–2000, 2002–03, and 2005 were significantly low years. We did not categorize 1991 as either a high or low year because the low sample of stations surveyed that year was inadequate for conclusive findings. For the year-pairs with significant changes, calling changed by a mean factor of 27.6 (range 2.3 to 52.6) from the low to high year and by a mean factor of 21.1 (range 2.0 to 62.3) from high to low year.

By contrast, annual calling indices

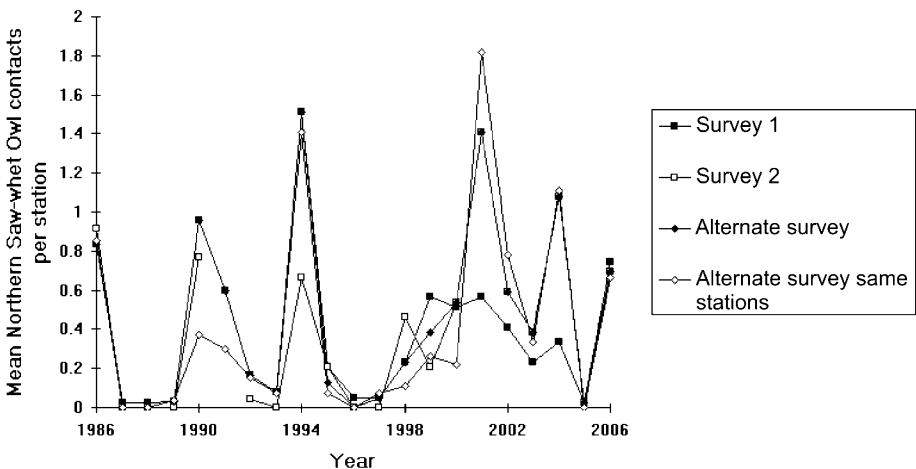


Figure 1. Mean contacts per listening station each year (annual calling index) for Northern Saw-whet Owl in Wisconsin for survey 1, survey 2, alternate survey, and alternate survey same stations (see Table 1).



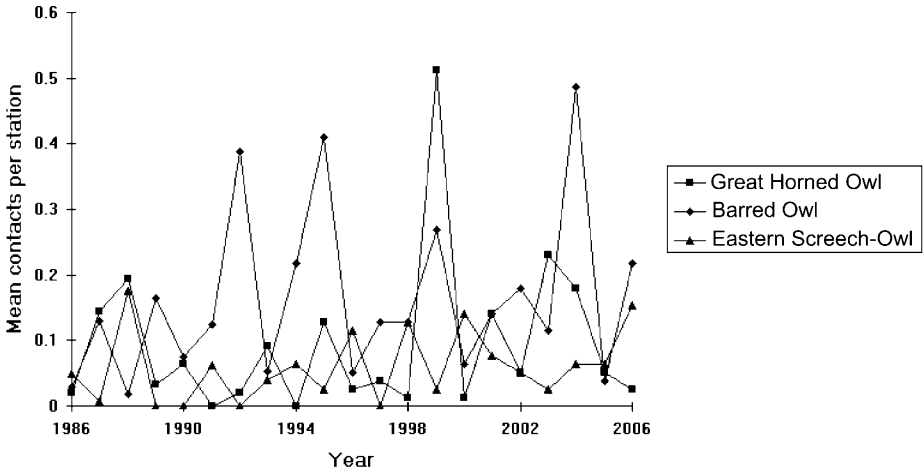


Figure 2. Mean contacts per listening station each year (annual calling index) on surveys 1 and 2 combined for Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, and Eastern Screech-Owl in Wisconsin.

for the three other analyzable owl species were variable but not as much as for Saw-whet Owl and showed little consistent pattern (Fig. 2). Great Horned Owl had little variation among years except for an outlier high year in 1999; only the two year-pairs including 1999 (1998–99 and 1999–2000) had significant changes in calling. Barred Owl had three high years (1992, 1995, 2004) (Fig. 2); only the decrease from 1995 to 1996 was significant. Eastern Screech-Owl had the least variation among years, and no significant changes in the year-pairs.

The annual calling indices of these

four owl species yielded no significant interspecific correlations (Table 4). However, at the scale of the listening station, all interspecific correlations were positive, even if weakly so (Table 5). Three of these correlations were significant; the strongest was between Saw-whet Owl and Barred Owl. No species showed a significant long-term trend in annual calling indices on surveys 1 and 2 ( $P>0.10$ ). No species showed a significant difference in number of contacts between the first and second survey, for all years except 1991 and for 1994–2006 (when location and number of stations were constant and timing of surveys less

Table 4. Spearman rank correlation coefficients ( $r$ ) of annual calling indices for surveys 1 and 2 in Wisconsin between species.  $N=21$  years,  $P>0.10$  for all.

	Great Horned Owl $r$	Barred Owl $r$	E. Screech-Owl $r$
No. Saw-whet Owl	-0.271	+0.226	+0.251
Great Horned Owl		+0.102	-0.199
Barred Owl			-0.259

Table 5. Spearman rank correlation coefficients ( $r$ ) of total contacts per listening station among pairs of species ( $N=1615$  listening stations in 1986–2006 in Wisconsin); NS=not significant

	Great Horned Owl		Barred Owl		Eastern Screech-Owl	
	$r$	$P$	$r$	$P$	$r$	$P$
No. Saw-whet Owl	+0.011	NS	+0.124	<0.01	+0.053	<0.05
Great Horned Owl	—		+0.005	NS	+0.003	NS
Barred Owl	—		—		+0.052	<0.05

variable) (Fig. 3). However, only the Saw-whet Owl showed a positive correlation in annual calling indices between survey 1 and 2 (Table 6). Saw-whet Owls and Eastern Screech-Owls showed no significant difference in amount of calling by whether any large owls (Great Horned and Barred Owls) did or did not call earlier at the same station: 0.49 vs. 0.38 Saw-whet Owl contacts and 0.066 vs. 0.056 Eastern Screech-Owl contacts after the second playback, respectively (Mann-Whitney U test two-tailed  $P>0.20$  for both small owl species).

**Comparisons to other surveys**—We compared the Wisconsin calling indices to indices for the same species in other parts of the mid-continent. Indices for Saw-whet Owl in Manitoba (Duncan 2006) and Wisconsin covaried significantly during 1991–99 but correlated negatively and non-significantly during 2000–05 (Table 7). For Saw-whet Owls, the correlation between last year's Manitoba index and this year's Wisconsin index was non-significant but positive for both time periods, more strongly for 2000–05. Great Horned Owl indices had somewhat opposite results, with none

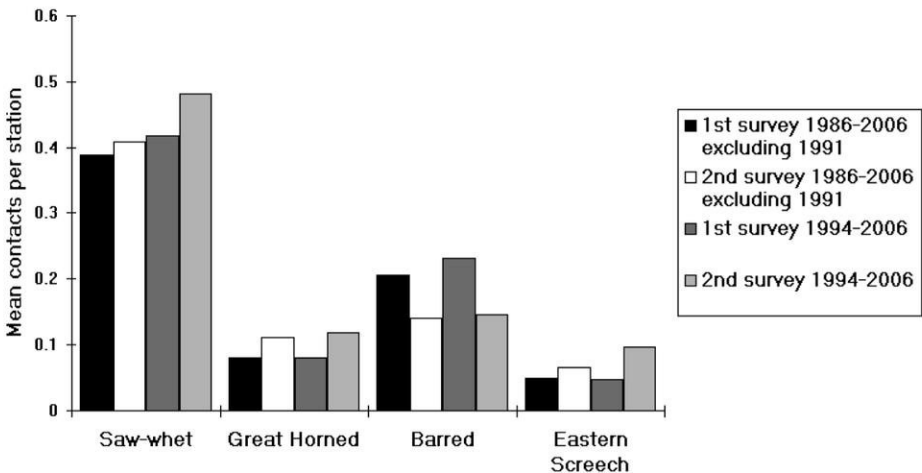


Figure 3. Mean contacts per listening station for four owl species on survey 1 vs. survey 2 in Wisconsin for all years except 1991 (which had an inadequate sample for survey 2) and for 1994–2006 (which had no variation in number and location of stations and timing varied less among years). No comparison within species and sample of years was significantly different (Mann-Whitney U test  $P>0.10$  for all).

Table 6. Spearman rank correlation coefficients (r) of annual calling indices for survey 1 vs. survey 2 (see Table 1) in Wisconsin.

	1986–2006 except 1991		1994–2006	
	r	P	r	P
No. Saw-whet Owl	+0.859	<0.01	+0.757	<0.01
Great Horned Owl	+0.123	>0.10	+0.266	>0.10
Barred Owl	+0.182	>0.10	+0.364	>0.10
Eastern Screech-Owl	+0.150	>0.10	+0.052	>0.10

Table 7. Spearman rank correlation coefficients (r) of Wisconsin calling indices for surveys 1 and 2 (see Table 1) to the same species' indices in Manitoba's Nocturnal Owl Survey (Duncan 2006), which had one method for 1991-99 and another for 2000-05. "Same year" correlates indices from the same year; "following year" correlates the Manitoba indices to the following year in Wisconsin. NS=not significant.

Wisconsin index	1991–99 (9 years)		2000–05 (6 years)	
	r	P	r	P
Same year				
Saw-whet	+0.720	<0.05	-0.486	NS
Great Horned	+0.282	NS	+0.638	NS
Following year				
Saw-whet	+0.343	NS	+0.714	<0.10 (NS)
Great Horned	-0.609	<0.10 (NS)	+0.290	NS

significant (Table 7): stronger covariance in the later than earlier period in both kinds of correlations. A weak, non-significant positive correlation for Saw-whet Owl indices occurred between the Minnesota (Vora 2006) and Wisconsin surveys, and negative non-significant correlations for Great Horned and Barred Owls, stronger for the latter (Table 8). It was not possible to compare indices between Manitoba and Minnesota, because too few years were available for Minnesota, and they were split between the two periods of the Manitoba survey.

In the Manitoba surveys, Saw-whet Owl calling also varied annually, with peaks every 3–5 years. For 1991–99, peaks occurred in 1991, 1994, and 1999, and troughs in 1992 and 1996–98. For 2000–05, peaks occurred in 2000 and 2003, with 2004–05 not

that much lower. We did not evaluate the Minnesota results for cyclicity because they contained only seven years during the study period (1992–2002).

In the Manitoba small mammal census, the ranks of annual abundance for red-backed (*Clethrionomys gapperi*) and meadow (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*) voles significantly covaried ( $r=+0.695$ ,  $N=21$ ,  $P<0.01$ ), as did red-backed voles and shrews ( $r=+0.445$ ,  $P<0.05$ ). Meadow

Table 8. Spearman rank correlation coefficients (r) of Wisconsin surveys 1 and 2 annual calling indices to the same species' indices in the same year of the Minnesota survey (Vora 2006); N=7 years, NS=not significant.

	r	P
No. Saw-whet Owl	+0.321	NS
Great Horned Owl	–0.126	NS
Barred Owl	–0.679	<0.10 (NS)

Table 9. Spearman rank correlation coefficients ( $r$ ) of small mammal abundance indices in south-eastern Manitoba to owl indices in Manitoba and Wisconsin. "Voles" = average of ranks for red-backed vole and meadow vole. "Voles and shrews" = average of ranks for the two voles and the shrews. N=9 years for 1991–99, N=6 years for 2000–05, N=21 years for current year's ranks for Wisconsin, N=20 years for last year's ranks for Wisconsin. \* =  $P < 0.05$  (significant), + =  $P < 0.06$  (near significant).

Mammal	Manitoba 1991–99	Saw-whet 2000–05	Wisconsin			
	$r$	$r$	Saw-whet	Great Horned	Barred	E. Screech
			$r$	$r$	$r$	$r$
Current year's ranks						
Red-back vole	+0.700*	–0.429	+0.430+	–0.220	–0.063	+0.084
Meadow vole	+0.483	+0.174	+0.315	–0.007	–0.245	+0.053
Voles	+0.683*	–0.371	+0.511*	–0.168	–0.154	+0.120
Voles and shrews	+0.544	–0.486	+0.429+	–0.184	+0.039	–0.076
Last year's ranks						
Red-backed vole	+0.417	+0.486	+0.090	–0.199	+0.198	–0.209
Meadow vole	+0.100	+0.551	+0.265	–0.075	+0.296	–0.013
Voles	+0.317	+0.486	+0.243	–0.062	+0.350	–0.148
Voles and shrews	+0.201	+0.429	+0.219	–0.348	+0.332	+0.003

ows voles and shrews non-significantly covaried ( $r=+0.374$ ,  $P<0.10$ ). Red-backed voles were most abundant, followed by meadows voles and shrews. For all three of these mammal categories, the top six ranks among years occurred with regular periodicity of 2–7 years: 1986, 1990–91, 1993, 1999, and 2006 for red-backed vole, 1986, 1991, 1993, 1999, and 2006 for meadow vole, and 1986, 1993, 1995, 1997, 1999, and 2005 for shrews.

Correlations of small mammal abundance in Manitoba yielded strong positive relationships to Saw-whet Owl calling indices in Manitoba (Table 9), more strongly in 1991–99 than 2000–05. For prey abundance in the same year, two significant correlations (both positive) occurred during the earlier period but none in the later period. No significant correlations occurred between Saw-whet Owl calling and the previous year's prey abundance, although all of these correlations were positive. All correlations of 2000–05 Saw-whet Owl calling with last year's prey abundance were

more strongly positive than the corresponding correlations with the current year's prey abundance, and the 2000–05 calling indices correlated more positively with last year's prey abundance than the 1991–99 calling did.

Remarkable positive statistical relationships occurred between small mammal abundance in Manitoba and Saw-whet Owl calling in Wisconsin (Table 9). Wisconsin Saw-whet Owl calling indices consistently covaried more strongly with the current year's than the previous year's mammal abundance in Manitoba, but all these correlations were positive. Several of these current year correlations were positively significant, or near significant. Other owl species in Wisconsin had no significant or near-significant patterns (all  $P>0.10$ ).

## DISCUSSION

**Wisconsin surveys**—All tests for covariance between different ways of cal-

culating annual calling indices in Wisconsin were positive and significant for all species (Tables 2, 3). This provides some reassurance that the patterns we report here are not confounded by the variation in when and how much surveying occurred over the years.

Saw-whet Owls significant peaked in calling every 2–7 (average 4) years (Fig. 1). The amount of calling significantly changed within 9 of 21 year-pairs tested, indicating an increase to, or a decrease from, a peak. By contrast, diurnal searches for pellets, roosts, and roosting Saw-whet Owls in these study areas during the auditory survey season from 1986 to 1990 (Swengel and Swengel 1992a,b) did not indicate strong patterns of annual variation in owl abundance. Thus, this variation in amount of calling may relate to some variation in actual number of owls present but also has a behavioral component (i.e., willingness to call).

The three other analyzable owl species did not vary in calling as consistently as the Saw-whet Owl (Fig. 2). These three species each had only 0–2 significant changes in amount of calling in tests of 21 year-pairs. It is unknown whether more significant patterns would have occurred if the surveys had used tape playback of their vocalizations.

No species showed a significant long-term trend in the amount of calling. Thus, whether there was a strong pattern of annual variation in amount of calling, as with Saw-whet Owl, or variability with little discernable patterns, as with the three other species, the long-term pattern in amount of calling appeared relatively stable.

Given the strong statistical patterns

of variation in calling by Saw-whet Owl but weak patterns in the other three owls, it is not surprising that the four species showed no significant interspecific correlations in annual indices and that some of these non-significant correlations were negative and some positive (Table 4). Thus, fluctuation in amount of calling among years did not correlate among species.

However, at the scale of the listening station, all interspecific correlations were positive (even if weakly so) and three species-pairs covaried significantly, with the strongest between Saw-whet Owl and Barred Owl. The latter correlation may be explained primarily by similar habitat preferences. Both these owl species are more associated only with forest, while the other two analyzable owl species occur not only in forest but also in forest edges and treelines in open and urban areas (Swengel and Swengel 1987, Johnsgard 1988, Robbins 1991, König et al. 1999, Niemuth 2006, Petersen 2006, Shea 2006, Swengel 2006). However, the different patterns of annual variation in calling among these species should confound these correlations. Since they were nonetheless all positive and half were significant, this suggests that calling by any owl may have a small contagious effect on calling by any other owl. This possibility is also implied in that calling by large owls did not decrease calling by small owls. In fact, both small owl species (Saw-whet Owl, Eastern Screech-Owl) actually averaged slightly more contacts when large owl(s) had previously called at the same station than when no large owl had just called.

No species showed a significant difference in number of contacts be-

tween survey 1 and survey 2 (Fig. 3), but only the Saw-whet Owl had a positive correlation in annual calling indices between survey 1 and survey 2 (Table 6). This could be due to greater statistical power, as the Saw-whet Owl was found much more than the other species. Alternatively, the Saw-whet Owl may have had more consistency than the other owl species in amount of calling within a given season between survey 1 and survey 2. Conversely, for the other owl species, the relationship of annual calling indices varied more between survey 1 and survey 2 within year, but the average amount of calling over all years combined for survey 1 ended up being similar to that on survey 2.

**Comparisons to other surveys**—Both in Wisconsin (Fig. 1) and Manitoba (Duncan 2006), Saw-whet Owl calling showed a consistent pattern of regular periodicity, with peak calling every 2–7 (average 3–5) years. Small mammal abundance in southeastern Manitoba reported here likewise showed periodicity over 2–7 years. Furthermore, it is remarkable that we obtained any positive significant correlations of Wisconsin Saw-whet Owl calling to both Saw-whet Owl calling (Tables 7, 8) and small mammal abundance (Table 9) in Manitoba, given that these locations are >770 km apart. All these significant correlations were within year between calling indices or between calling and prey indices. Consistent with this, Palmer (1987) found that both Boreal Owl and Saw-whet Owl had peak calling years when *Microtus* and *Clethrionomys* were at peak abundance.

A one-year lag in the relationship between Manitoba and Wisconsin in-

dices may also occur, since those correlations were consistently positive, albeit never significantly (Table 7, 9). As additional evidence for this, a spectacular irruption of northern owl species southward into Wisconsin occurred during the winter of 2004–05 (Lange 2005, Bacon and Paulios 2006, Brady 2006). In 2004 in Manitoba, both red-backed vole and meadow vole had their lowest abundances during 1986–2006, while shrews were second lowest. In the Wisconsin surveys (Fig. 1), Saw-whet Owls had a significantly high calling year in 2004, but 2005 was significantly low (a 27.5 factor decrease from 2004), perhaps as a lag in response to the prey crash that had already occurred in Manitoba. Low calling by Saw-whet Owls in Wisconsin in 2005 may also be due to competition for prey due to the presence of many owls that irrupted into Wisconsin in the winter of 2004–05.

By contrast, no significant relationships occurred between calling by any other analyzable owl in Wisconsin to calling by the same species elsewhere or to small mammal abundance in Manitoba. The Saw-whet Owl is the only analyzable owl species in the Wisconsin survey that regularly migrates each year (Johnsgard 1988, Robbins 1991, Cannings 1993, König et al. 1999). The observed variation in Saw-whet Owl calling in southern Wisconsin appears to be a function not just of the number of owls present, but also of their behavioral inclination to vocalize. Their calling appears to relate to small mammal abundance and Saw-whet Owl calling further north, as evidenced by covariance with prey and calling indices in Manitoba. We hope that more surveys of owls and small mammals in more areas for more

years will help clarify the spatial scale and underlying factors of these relationships.

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A Ruddy Turnstone visiting the beach at Menomonee Park in Oshkosh on 22 May 2007 was photographed by Dennis Malueg.





White-crowned Sparrow by Scott Franke

# Nesting Waterbirds of Rush Lake, Is There a Future?

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## INTRODUCTION

Rush Lake is a shallow, prairie pot-hole wetland located in the southwestern corner of Winnebago County and the northwestern corner of Fond du Lac County, Wisconsin. It has an area of 3,070 acres and an average depth of 2 feet. Rush Lake is probably best known for its nesting population of Red-necked Grebes (*Podiceps grisegena*) and Wisconsin's first nesting record for Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) (Ziebell 1990).

Rush Lake was once extensively covered with hardstem bulrush (*Scirpus acutus*) and scattered islands of cattail (*Typha latifolia* and *T. angustifolia*). Rush Lake was named for its extensive beds of hardstem bulrush. Submergent vegetation was also very abundant in the lake. In the summer it would be so thick that it was very difficult to maneuver a skiff around the lake. This was primarily due to dense beds of the alga *Chara*, which often extended several inches above the water.

The lake's scattered areas of open water, extensive emergent and submergent vegetation, and abundant food were ideal for birds. Sadly, this is no longer true.

## METHODS

Unless otherwise noted, data were acquired during an annual, one-day survey of birds on Rush Lake, as described by Ziebell (1999). This survey takes place the third week of June and has been conducted since 1980.

## VEGETATION

The emergent vegetation on Rush Lake has been steadily disappearing due to constant high water levels maintained by a dam that was constructed/improved at the lake's outlet in 1953 (Mossman et al. 1988, Ziebell 1990, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources 2005). The loss of emergent vegetation and the degradation of habitat on Rush Lake occurred in three phases.

The first phase was the extensive loss of emergent vegetation due to constant high water levels. In the late 1960s studies by university professors and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) concluded that the stable water levels were damaging the lake's environment and reducing the bulrush beds (WDNR 2005). Throughout the

1970s, '80s, and '90s citizens, university researchers, and WDNR personnel voiced their concern about the continued loss of emergent vegetation. By 1998, emergent vegetation covered about 25% of the lake (Ziebell 1999). By 2005, emergent vegetation only covered about 10% of the lake.

The second phase began in 1994, when the remaining bulrush beds began to be overwhelmed by cattail. In 1998, many of the once pure bulrush beds were 70% to 80% cattail (Ziebell 1999). By 2005, these bulrush beds were completely covered by cattail. Only a few small, sparse stands of pure bulrush remained on the lake. This is significant because many of the birds that nest on the lake, such as the Red-necked Grebe, prefer bulrush. Also during this time the extensive growths of *Chara* began to diminish. By 2000, *Chara* was noticeably absent.

In 1999, the third and most damaging phase began. Rush Lake's crystal clear water turned heavily turbid, like pea soup. Shallow lakes and deep water marshes generally exist in one of two conditions. They either have clear water and a robust aquatic plant community providing good fish and wildlife habitat, or they are turbid, algae filled, open water systems that provide poor habitat (Scheffer 2001). Rush Lake had become a turbid, algae filled, open water system with poor habitat.

Turbid water reduces light penetration and limits submergent plant growth. The reduction and eventual elimination of submergent plants (and the associated insect, crustacean, and fish life) reduces and eliminates food sources for many species of birds.

## BIRDS

Birds are good indicators of the health of an ecosystem. The following species accounts give an indication of the declining health of the Rush Lake ecosystem.

Black-crowned Night-Herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) stopped nesting on Rush Lake in the mid 1980s due to the loss of emergent vegetation and predation by Great Horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus*) (Ziebell 1985). They continued to use the lake for feeding, but their numbers dropped after the water became turbid in 1999.

Since 1994, the Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*) had become more abundant and regularly nested on Rush Lake, due to the increase of cattail habitat (Ziebell 1999). However, Common Moorhens last nested on Rush Lake in 2000 and the number of birds observed on the lake dropped to zero in 2003 with none observed since (Figure 1).

The American Coot (*Fulica americana*) was a very common nesting species on Rush Lake. It last nested on the lake in 2000. The number of American Coots using the lake decreased to ten birds in 2003 and none in 2004 and 2005 (Figure 2).

Fall concentrations of American Coots on Rush Lake numbered in the thousands well into the late 1990s. Starting in the fall of 2000, numbers were noticeably lower with 1,500 observed. In 2001, only 80 were observed. Starting in 2002, American Coots were not observed on the lake during fall surveys.

The Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) was an extremely abundant nesting species on Rush Lake. This species last nested on

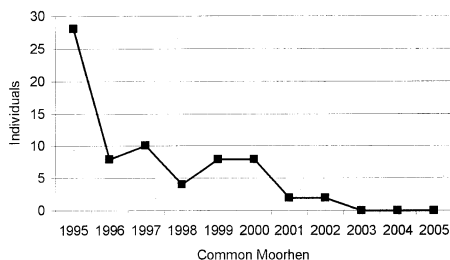


Figure 1. Common Moorhens observed during June surveys on Rush Lake, Winnebago County, Wisconsin, 1995–2005.

the lake in 2003. The number of Yellow-headed Blackbirds observed on the lake declined after the turbid water started in 1999 and no birds were observed in 2004 and 2005 (Figure 2).

Pied-billed Grebes (*Podilymbus podiceps*) were common nesters on Rush Lake; they last nested on the lake in 2003. The number of Pied-billed Grebes dropped in 1999, the first year of turbid water, and never recovered (Figure 3).

Black Terns (*Chlidonias niger*) were always regular nesters on Rush Lake, but their numbers started to decrease with the loss of emergent vegetation. The last year that Black Terns nested on the lake was in 1998. In 1999, the first year of turbid water, Black Tern numbers dropped and after 2000 none were observed on the lake (Figure 3).

The Red-necked Grebe has always been a regular nester on Rush Lake. Even with the reduction of its favorite nesting material, bulrush, and the turbid water that began in 1999, the Red-necked Grebe continued to nest on the lake. The number of Red-necked Grebes observed actually increased for several years after the turbid water started in 1999 (Figure 4). The number of grebes observed dropped in

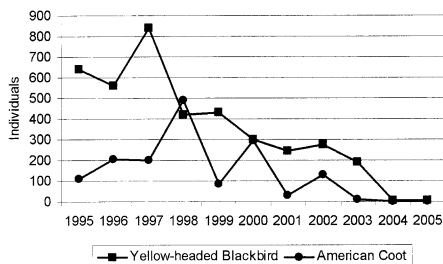


Figure 2. Yellow-headed Blackbirds and American Coots observed during June surveys on Rush Lake, Winnebago County, Wisconsin, 1995–2005.

2004 (Figure 4). This appears to have been the result of extremely high water levels, 3 feet higher than normal, that left very little nesting habitat.

The Forster's Tern (*Sterna forsteri*) is another regular nesting species on Rush Lake. As shown in Figure 5, its numbers fluctuated greatly. Even with the loss of emergent vegetation and the turbid water in 1999 they continued to use the lake for nesting and feeding. As with the Red-necked Grebe, a decline in numbers in 2004 appears to have been due to limited nesting habitat resulting from high water levels (Figure 5).

## RUSH LAKE MANAGEMENT PLAN

In 2000, just as the health of Rush Lake was seriously declining, the Rush Lake Steering Committee was formed to revitalize the lake and surrounding wetlands. The Committee consisted of representatives from the townships surrounding the lake, Winnebago County, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

In July 2001, five study groups were formed to facilitate development of a strategic plan to address the issues on

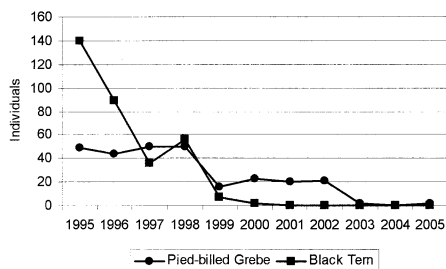


Figure 3. Pied-billed Grebes and Black Terns observed during June surveys on Rush Lake, Winnebago County, Wisconsin, 1995–2005.

Rush Lake. The five study groups included water level, vegetation, wildlife, water quality, and lead shot. The groups consisted of steering committee members and interested citizens. The study groups concluded that the lake water level should be temporarily reduced to expose 50% of the lake bottom for two growing seasons. Lower water levels would allow regeneration of native wetland plants, consolidate bottom sediments, improve water clarity, and facilitate winterkill of non-native carp (WDNR 2005).

With the study groups' recommendations the Rush Lake Steering Committee issued its Rush Lake Action Plan in April 2002. The goal was to restore Rush Lake and surrounding wetlands, so that the area once again reaches its maximum species diversifi-

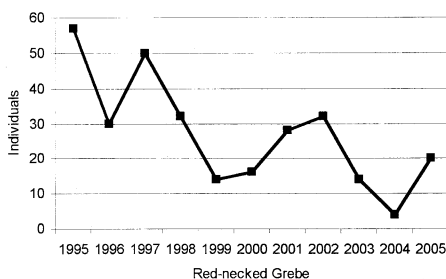


Figure 4. Red-necked Grebes observed during June surveys on Rush Lake, Winnebago County, Wisconsin, 1995–2005.

cation and recreational use. This included improving water quality and wildlife habitat in the lake through a two-year water level drawdown.

After funding for the project was secured, work began in September 2005. The old dam was replaced by a new dam and the outlet was dredged and regraded. This work was completed in December 2005. In April 2006, a channel was cut through cattail from the new dam to the open water of the lake to facilitate drainage.

In June 2006, after years of work, a drawdown was started. Due to a very wet spring the drawdown was started later than planned. However, the results at the end of the summer were very encouraging. Approximately 80% of the lake bottom was exposed and the new growth of emergent vegetation was off to a very good start.

It appears that 2007 was another successful drawdown year with new emergent vegetation covering much of the lake.

## DISCUSSION

Decreases in the number of birds using Rush Lake for nesting and feeding suggest that the lake's health had deteriorated to a critical point.

The American Coot and Common Moorhen are species that depend heavily on submergent vegetation for food, such as pondweeds and *Chara* (Brisbin and Mowbray 2002). With turbid water starting in 1999, it only took two years for their major food supply (submergent vegetation) to decrease to the point that nesting was no longer attempted. The food supply became so reduced that Common Moorhens and American Coots were no longer observed on the lake.

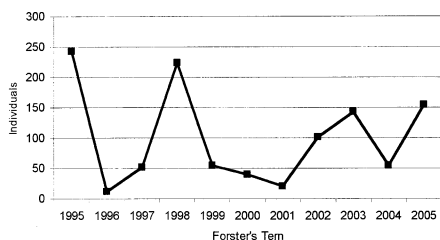


Figure 5. Forster's Terns observed during June surveys on Rush Lake, Winnebago County, Wisconsin, 1995–2005.

The lack of submergent vegetation was shockingly obvious as the water was drawn down in 2006. The draw down revealed acres and acres of mud bottom with few if any submergent plants.

Other species, such as the Pied-billed Grebe and Yellow-headed Blackbird, no longer nested or were observed on the lake when their food supply of insects, crustaceans, and small fish was no longer available. This occurred in 2003 and 2004, several years after the submergent vegetation apparently reached its critical low level in 2001.

The Red-necked Grebe has not disappeared from Rush Lake. Apparently this grebe is able to utilize food sources (such as rough fish) that are able to exist even after the loss of submergent vegetation. However, it seems unlikely that this food source would be able to sustain these grebes for very long.

The Forster's Tern also has not abandoned Rush Lake. The number of birds observed and nesting on the lake appears to be more influenced by water levels and available nesting sites than food supply. Forster's Terns also frequently fly to surrounding wetlands for food and are not totally dependent upon food from Rush Lake.

The reduction of emergent vegetation on Rush Lake reduced and eliminated some species of birds. However,

the turbid water started a chain reaction in the food chain that greatly reduced or eliminated many species of birds from Rush Lake.

The future now looks brighter for the birds that use Rush Lake. After two successful drawdown seasons, emergent vegetation again covers much of Rush Lake. When water is returned to the lake it should once more be a healthy prairie pothole wetland. We will have to wait and see if the birds return, but I am counting on it.

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Slaty-backed Gull with spread wings by Scott Franke



Slaty-backed Gull on the ice at Little Lake Butte des Morts by Scott Franke

# Ring-necked Pheasant Nest Site Characteristics in Northwest Wisconsin

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## ABSTRACT

*Sixty-one Ring-necked Pheasant (Phasianus colchicus) nests were found in 1983–91 in 800 ha of undisturbed grassland in St. Croix and Polk Counties as part of a duck nesting study. Vegetation measurements were taken at the nest and nesting success was determined. Nest success was 44% with predators causing the greatest nest losses. No vegetation measurement was correlated with nest success with the exception of smooth brome grass (Bromus inermis). Pheasant hens selected dense residual grass cover for nest sites.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Ring-necked Pheasant prefers to nest in dense grassy vegetation growing in uplands (Joselyn et al. 1968, Wood and Brotherson 1981). Nests found early in the season are usually located in undisturbed dead, residual vegetation from previous growing seasons (Salinger 1952, Bartmann 1969, Baxter and Wolfe 1973, Boyd and Richmond 1983, Penrod et al. 1986). Later renests are often found in hayfields (Gates 1966, Kuck

et al. 1970, Dumke and Pils 1979a). Studies have shown that nesting and hatching success is higher when pheasants select dense cover to conceal nest sites (Joselyn et al. 1968, Keyser 1986, Carroll and Saylor 1990).

The objective of this study was to describe the characteristics of Ring-necked Pheasant nests and nest sites and attempt to determine if any of those characteristics influenced nest success.

## STUDY AREA AND METHODS

The study was conducted in the prairie pothole region of northwestern Wisconsin. Evrard (1996) has described the 1,295-km<sup>2</sup> study area in north central St. Croix and south central Polk Counties.

During 1983–91, I searched approximately 800 ha of undisturbed grassland in Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs) and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) fields for duck nests once in May, June, and July each year using a cable-chain drag (Higgins et al. 1969) pulled between 2 vehicles. The mean number of years since field



disturbance (mainly fire, but also mowing, grazing, and cultivation) was 3.4 years and ranged from 0 to 15 years.

I found nests when female pheasants flushed as the cable-chain drag passed over occupied nests. This nest-searching method does not locate unattended, hatched, or destroyed nests. Furthermore, I missed some attended nests due to the observed habit of pheasant females running away from the nest before flushing.

I marked the nests so they could be revisited to determine their fate. Nests were revisited at approximately three week intervals. Successful nests were those that hatched at least 1 egg. Based upon nest fates, I calculated apparent nest success [(successful nests/total nests)  $\times$  100].

The modified Mayfield method (Johnson 1979) of calculating nest success is more appropriate than the apparent nest success method when using a cable-chain drag to find nests. However, I did not calculate Mayfield nest success because the development stages of the eggs were not estimated at the time of discovery. Pheasant egg shells are opaque, so the candling method of Weller (1956) that I used to estimate the stage of development of duck eggs could not be used for pheasants.

Therefore, my nest success estimates are probably biased upward due to the failure to find unattended nests. Robertson (1996) provided a good discussion of the biases associated with various types of nest searching.

I measured the vegetation at the nest sites for height-density or visual obstruction readings (VORs), vegetation height, and litter depth. A Robel

pole (Robel et al. 1970) was placed at the nest and 8 VORs were taken to and from the nest using another Robel pole placed 1.5 m from the nest in the 4 cardinal directions. I measured the vegetation height and litter depth directly on the Robel pole at the nest. In addition, I determined vegetation species composition surrounding the nest using a 0.25 m<sup>2</sup> quadrat centered on the nest. The Importance Values (Curtis 1959), which is the sum of the relative frequency, density, and cover, were calculated for the major plant species.

I also measured the vegetation within the same block or field of nesting cover where the pheasant nests were found. Ten points were regularly spaced by pacing on an imaginary line running diagonally across each field. At each point, I measured 8 VORs (4 in and 4 out) on Robel poles, 1 at the center of the point and 1 at each cardinal direction 1.5 m from the center point. A 0.25 m<sup>2</sup> quadrat, to determine plant species composition, was also centered about each of the 10 points in each nesting field.

I used the nonparametric Wilcoxon 2-sample test (SAS Inst. Inc. 1989) to compare nest characteristics of hatched and destroyed nests. I used Paired *t*-tests (Gustafson 1984) to compare mean VORs at the pheasant nests and the stratified random points within the same nesting cover. Lastly, I used Chi-square analyses (Gustafson 1984) to evaluate pheasant preferences for type and age of nesting cover. Results were considered significant at  $P \leq 0.05$ .

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During the study, I found 61 incubated Ring-necked Pheasant nests. The mean clutch size was  $12.8 \pm 0.5$  eggs. This compares to a mean size of 11.2 eggs found in 574 incubated clutches in east central Wisconsin by Gates and Hale (1975).

Apparent nest success was 44%. Predators destroyed 33% of the nests, 18% were destroyed by research and management activities, 3% were infertile, and 2% unknown. Apparent success for pheasant nests found by Gates and Hale (1975) in east central Wisconsin was 63% for 55 nests in unharvested hay fields and 46% for 323 nests in undisturbed wetlands. Predators destroyed 17% of the nests in unharvested hayfields and 34% in undisturbed wetlands. Dumke and Pils (1979b) reported apparent nest success of 31% for 114 nests found primarily in retired croplands in southeast Wisconsin with predation being the chief cause of nest loss.

I found an increased percentage of smooth brome grass surrounding the nest improved nest success (hatched nests  $29.8 \pm 7.6$  cm, unsuccessful  $10.0 \pm 7.7$  cm,  $P = 0.03$ ). No other measured nest site parameter was different among successful and unsuccessful nests (Table 1). Unlike earlier studies (Joselyn et al. 1968, Keyser 1986, Carol and Sayler 1990), I found no difference in mean VORs of hatched ( $29.0 \pm 2.2$  cm) versus destroyed ( $29.0 \pm 2.4$  cm) nests ( $P = 0.35$ ).

Within a block or field of nesting cover, pheasants chose denser vegetation for their nest sites. Mean VORs at 49 pheasant nests ( $31.6 \pm 1.5$  cm) were higher ( $P < 0.001$ ) than at paired random points within the same nesting cover ( $17.3 \pm 1.0$  cm).

Vegetation surrounding the nests was dominated by grasses (81%), mainly switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*), brome grass, and quack grass (*Agropyron repens*) (Table 1). I placed nesting cover into 3 categories, switch grass, cool season grasses (mainly

Table 1. Ring-necked Pheasant nest site characteristics.

Variable	Hatched Nests			Destroyed Nests		
	n	Mean	SE	n	Mean	SE
Distance (m) to:						
Nearest path	27	41.0	12.4	22	33.1	4.8
Cover edge	27	193.2	39.0	25	110.2	16.8
Nearest water	27	585.2	65.6	24	571.2	69.6
Max. veg. height (cm)	27	82.4	4.6	20	77.2	4.4
Litter depth (cm)	23	1.9	0.2	15	2.5	0.3
Mean VOR (cm)	27	29.0	2.2	20	29.0	2.4
Percent coverage						
Live grasses	27	42.8	4.9	15	33.0	8.5
Total grasses	27	80.9	4.8	15	83.7	5.6
Switch grass	27	19.8	6.5	18	42.2	10.0
Brome grass	27	29.8	7.6	15	10.0	7.7
Quack grass	27	15.9	5.6	18	21.9	7.4
Blue grass ( <i>Poa sp.</i> )	27	4.6	2.3	15	4.6	3.1
Live forbs	21	18.3	4.3	16	12.2	4.4
Total forbs	27	20.9	4.9	18	14.2	4.3

brome and quack grasses), and forbs based upon an Importance Value  $\geq 50\%$ . Comparing all fields with those fields containing pheasant nests showed that pheasants preferred fields dominated by switch grass ( $P < 0.001$ ). Comparing the plant species composition surrounding pheasant nests with that of all potential nesting fields showed a strong nest site preference for switch grass ( $P < 0.001$ ). Forbs were relatively unimportant.

Dead, residual grass from previous growing seasons was important. The cover surrounding the nests had not been disturbed for an average of 4.9 years. Since the mean number of years since disturbance for 935 nesting fields during the study was 3.4 years, it was evident that pheasants were selecting "older" vegetation for nesting ( $P < 0.001$ ).

Penrod et al. (1986) found that pheasant nest establishment and success were positively correlated with use of fallow grass with preferred species including brome grass. Brome grass was also important at pheasant nest sites in North Dakota (Carroll and Sayler 1990).

The mean VOR at the 57 nest sites in this study was 28.3 cm and the mean height was 82.2 cm. The mean VOR at 27 North Dakota nests was 47.1 cm (Carroll and Sayler 1990) and the mean height for 16 pheasant nests in Utah was 65.0 cm (Wood and Brotherson 1981).

## CONCLUSIONS

Undisturbed upland grasslands originally seeded as nesting cover for ducks on WPAs and for reducing soil erosion under the CRP agricultural

land retirement program provided nesting habitat for Ring-necked Pheasants. Female pheasants nested in sites having relatively tall, dense, and old residual grassy vegetation, dominated by switch grass. These nests had similar nest success to some other studies in Wisconsin.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Two Dunlins on the Menomonee Park beach in Oshkosh on 22 May 2007 were pictured by Dennis Malueg.



Flying Slaty-backed Gull by Pat Ready, 4 January 2007



Slaty-backed Gull flying with Herring Gull was captured by Pat Ready on 4 January 2007

# Wisconsin May Counts—2007

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The ten May Counts (Table 1) in 2007 are an average level of participation of the past eight years, but about half of what was normal 15 years ago. Leading the way in participation as usual was Winnebago with 32 participants, followed by Bayfield with 22. Winnebago remained on the top of the species list with a total of 179 species, nosing out Milwaukee/Ozaukee's 172 species, with Oconto following at 164 species, and Sheboygan adding the fourth highest total at 163 species.

The total species list of 239 compares with an average of 244 over the previous 18 years, paling in comparison with the record high of two years ago, 261. The 19 year total for species remains at 297. American Avocets and Lark Sparrows (Table 2) were tallied for only the third time in 19 years. Making appearances for only the fourth time in the past 19 years were Harlequin Duck, Whimbrel, Loggerhead Shrike, and Carolina Wren.

Table 1. The 2007 Wisconsin May Counts.

Count	Date	Time	Sky	Wind	Temp	Observ.	Species
Winnebago	5/12	03:30–20:30	Fair	NE8	45–63	32	179
Ashland/Bayfield	5/22	05:00–16:00	Fair	S 20	50–85	12	160
Bayfield	5/25	06:00–20:45	Fair	NW15	50–64	22	152
Florence	5/14		Clo.	NE3	45–64	4	127
Oconto	5/23	02:00–20:30	Pt Clo.	SW8	57–84	11	164
Fond du Lac	5/12					5	155
Sheboygan	5/12	03:00–17:00	Pt Clo.		43–59	13	163
Milwaukee/Ozaukee	5/12		Fair	SE12	45–70	12	172
Rock	5/12					8	153
Kenosha	5/12	04:30–20:00	Fair	N 12	43–64	1	132

Table 2. Species of note Wisconsin May Counts 2007.

Species	Count(s) recorded
Horned Grebe	Bayfield, Milwaukee/Ozaukee
Red-necked Grebe	Winnebago, Bayfield
Least Bittern	Oconto, Milwaukee/Ozaukee
Cattle Egret	Winnebago
Trumpeter Swan	Oconto
Tundra Swan	Rock
Northern Pintail	Winnebago
Harlequin Duck	Sheboygan
Black Scoter	Fond du Lac
Long-tailed Duck	Milwaukee/Ozaukee
Common Goldeneye	Ashland/Bayfield, Bayfield, Rock
Northern Goshawk	Florence
Red-shouldered Hawk	Fond du Lac, Kenosha, Rock
Rough-legged Hawk	Milwaukee/Ozaukee
Northern Bobwhite	Milwaukee/Ozaukee, Kenosha
Common Moorhen	Winnebago, Rock
American Avocet	Bayfield, Ashland/Bayfield
Willet	Ashland/Bayfield
Hudsonian Godwit	Ashland/Bayfield
Marbled Godwit	Bayfield
Baird's Sandpiper	Ashland/Bayfield, Bayfield, Winnebago
Wilson's Phalarope	Winnebago, Ashland/Bayfield
Thayer's Gull	Sheboygan
Great Black-backed Gull	Sheboygan, Milwaukee/Ozaukee
Black-billed Cuckoo	Oconto, Sheboygan
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Oconto, Ashland/Bayfield
Acadian Flycatcher	Rock
Loggerhead Shrike	Ashland/Bayfield
White-eyed Vireo	Milwaukee/Ozaukee, Rock
Philadelphia Vireo	Milwaukee/Ozaukee
Boreal Chickadee	Florence
Tufted Titmouse	Rock
Carolina Wren	Milwaukee/Ozaukee
American Pipit	Winnebago, Kenosha
Prothonotary Warbler	Kenosha, Rock
Louisiana Waterthrush	Fond du Lac, Rock, Milwaukee/Ozaukee
Connecticut Warbler	Winnebago, Kenosha, Milwaukee/Ozaukee
Hooded Warbler	Fond du Lac, Sheboygan, Milwaukee/Ozaukee, Rock
Lark Sparrow	Rock
Grasshopper Sparrow	Sheboygan, Winnebago, Fond du Lac, Rock
Henslow's Sparrow	Milwaukee/Ozaukee, Sheboygan, Fond du Lac, Winnebago
Le Conte's Sparrow	Milwaukee/Ozaukee, Ashland/Bayfield
Fox Sparrow	Fond du Lac
Lapland Longspur	Winnebago, Milwaukee/Ozaukee
Dickcissel	Oconto, Rock
Western Meadowlark	Ashland/Bayfield, Rock, Milwaukee/Ozaukee
Rusty Blackbird	Bayfield, Oconto
White-winged Crossbill	Florence, Oconto
Evening Grosbeak	Florence

# WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2007

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**T**he WSO Records Committee reviewed 70 records of 34 species for the spring season, accepting 58 of them. Six additional older seasonal records were also evaluated and accepted. Highlights of the spring season included Wisconsin's first Rock Wren, preceded by a hypothetical record in October 2003. In addition, a second Great-tailed Grackle record on the heels of the winter's first state record, the 4<sup>th</sup> accepted Black Rail, and the seventh Black Vulture were recorded. The Rock Wren is the 429<sup>th</sup> species on the state list.

Observers were notified of the committee's decisions by postcard in the instance of accepted records and by personal letter in the case of records not accepted.

## **ACCEPTED**

**Cinnamon Teal × Blue-winged Teal**  
(hybrid)—

#2007-013 Sauk Co., 6 April 2007, A. Holschbach (photo).

#2007-039 Waukesha Co., 14 April 2007, Gustafson.

These overall rusty, red-eyed, teal-sized ducks differed in the evidence of a diminished white facial crescent behind the bill, similar to the pattern of a Blue-winged Teal. In the case of the Sauk County bird, an additional white patch was noted before the black undertail coverts, as a Blue-winged Teal has. Finally, the Sauk County bird also showed some speckling on the rusty flanks, again reminiscent of the spotting on the flanks of a Blue-winged Teal.

## **Eurasian Wigeon—**

#2007-009 Outagamie Co., 6 April 2007, Shillinglaw, Tessen; 7 April 2007, Ready (photo), T. Wood; 9 April 2007, Dixon.

This wigeon contrasted with the adjacent American Wigeon in having a cinnamon head, buffy crown, salmon-colored breast, and gray back and flanks.

## **Barrow's Goldeneye—**

#2006-055 Milwaukee Co., 3 March 2007, T. Wood.



#2007-002 Sheboygan Co., 4 March 2007, T. Wood.

#2007-010 Bayfield Co., 24 March 2007, Brady (photo).

These drake Goldeneyes differed from the Common Goldeneyes in having a further extension of black down the flanks, with this black encompassing several white spots. The Common Goldeneyes exhibit more white on the flanks with a few black spots in this white area. In addition, the black of the point of the shoulder area extended down even farther than the rest of the black on the sides of the Barrow's Goldeneyes. In addition, the forehead of the Barrow's rose more steeply than the Common's forehead and the white spot on the face of the Common Goldeneyes was elongated into more of a white crescent on the Barrow's Goldeneye.

#### **Western Grebe—**

#2007-011 Dane Co., 25 May 2007, Heikkinen, Unson (photo), Stutz.

This Mallard-sized grebe was dark above and white below with white on the ventral neck as well. Also noted was a long, greenish yellow bill, with the red eye enclosed in the dark feathering of the side of the face.

#### **Glossy Ibis—**

#2007-012 Fond du Lac Co., 19 May 2007, Freriks (photo); 20 March 2007, T. Wood, Son-tag.

#2007-014 Grant Co., 19 May 2007, Schultz (photo); 21 May 2007, S. Cutright (photo).

A Snowy Egret-sized, brown-bodied bird was reported. The wings exhibited dark green coloration. The neck was relatively long, the beak long and de-

curved. The facial skin was dark, but a thin white line bordered the facial skin on the forehead and cheeks. This white line did not appear to go around the eyes, separating these birds from White-faced Ibises having a thicker white border around the facial skin, including the skin around the eye.

#### **Black Vulture—**

#2007-015 Manitowoc Co., 28 April 2007, Baumann.

Observed in flight with two Turkey Vultures, this all dark bird was slightly smaller. Its head was black instead of pink, and the tail was shorter, the wings shorter and relatively wider than those of a Turkey Vulture. The Black Vulture also had an area of white in the base of the primaries. The difference in color that the primaries of a Turkey Vulture have in comparison to the coverts was not seen on this bird. The slight dihedral position of the soaring wings of a Turkey Vulture was replaced by a flattened wing profile on this Black Vulture. Finally, the flapping of the wings of the Black Vulture was "choppier" than the flapping of the Turkey Vultures.

This seventh Wisconsin record is the state's first spring report.

#### **Black Rail—**

#2007-049 Milwaukee Co., 8 May 2007, Idzikowski.

A rail, smaller than a Sora seen in the same time frame, was reported to have uniform dark coloration with the exception of a small amount of light barring on the flank. It lacked an darkening around the base of the bill and exhibited no white undertail coverts and the tail was not elevated in typical Sora fashion.

This is Wisconsin's fourth record, the third at the Milwaukee Coast Guard Impoundment in the past 5 years.

**Black-necked Stilt—**

#2007-021 Eau Claire Co., 23 April 2007, Polk.

#2007-022 Dodge Co., 19 May 2007, Smith.

Noted was the overall tall and slender appearance of this shorebird. In addition, the long, pink-red legs, the black crown, nape, back, and wings in contrast to the white throat, foreneck, breast, and belly were mentioned. A thin, relatively long, black bill was also reported.

**Laughing Gull—**

#2007-017 Racine Co., 9 May 2007, Dixon.

#2007-018 Ozaukee Co., 14, 24 May 2007, Frank.

#2007-019 Ozaukee Co., 23 May 2007, S. Cutright, (photo), 24 May 2007, Frank.

The Racine County bird and the second Ozaukee County bird were slightly smaller than adjacent Ring-billed Gulls. The head was black with thin white edges to the upper and lower eyelids, a dark gray mantle, and had minimal evidence of white in the folded primary tips. The reddish-black bill was disproportionately long and had a slight droop to the tip. The legs were also disproportionately long and reddish-black in color. The first Ozaukee County report was also seen at the same time as the previously described adult bird. It differed in having a dark gray head, darker than the mantle color, but not the typical adult black color, suggesting a second year bird.

**Black-legged Kittiwake—**

#2007-020 Sheboygan Co., 30 May 2007, Brasser, Brasser, Tessen; 31 May 2007, Franke (photo), Gustafson.

Although distinctly larger than adjacent Bonaparte's Gulls, this gull was smaller than the Ring-billed Gulls. The folded gray wing was crossed by a wide black bar. The short legs were a striking black color; the bill yellow with a black tip. The white head had a black ear spot, but no black collar. In flight, the front edge of the primaries was black as was a bar extending from the carpus, across the secondaries to the mantle. The slightly notched tail had a black terminal band.

**Caspian Tern—**

#2007-048 Racine Co., 30 March 2007, Fare.

This limited description of a Herring Gull-sized tern with a black-tipped orange bill and black legs was enough to accept this second earliest spring record for Wisconsin.

(The earliest date is 26 March 1979 from Winnebago Co.)

**White-winged Dove—**

#2007-062 Kenosha Co., 16 May 2007, Switzer (photo).

This photo reveals a Mourning Dove-sized and -colored bird. It differed in having a long white edge to the folded wing, a shorter more squared off tail, and a dark "teardrop" on the lower cheek.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove—**

#2007-026 Grant Co., 15 April 2007, Stutz.

#2007-044 Crawford Co., 28 April 2007, Romano.

This dove was slightly larger and bulkier than the associated Mourning Doves. The tail was wider and squared at the end. Its overall color was light beige-gray with a black crescent on the nape and primaries darker in color than the general plumage. The undertail was black proximally, with dark gray undertail coverts.

**Barn Owl—**

#2007-024 Dane Co., 3 March 2007, Stutz.

This observer noted the extreme paleness of the underparts, as well as the large head relative to a hawk, and the flatness and paleness of the face. Specific mention was made of not seeing the wristmarks of a Short-eared Owl.

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher—**

#2007-027 Bayfield Co., 3,4 May 2007, Vietmeier (photo).

#2007-028 St.Croix Co., 28 May 2007, Persico.

The photo revealed an overall pale gray flycatcher with black wings and a black tail, a little greater in length than the rest of the body. Pinkish belly/flanks were also apparent.

**Bell's Vireo—**

#2007-045 Douglas Co., 31 May 2007, R. Johnson.

This Warbling Vireo-sized bird was in a flock of hundreds of Red-eyed Vireos. It was "soft gray," with "a hint of green." The breast was whitish with gray-green mottling on the flanks. A single, thin wingbar was also reported. The dark eye had a white eyering. The paleness of this bird seemingly fits the western race of this species better than the eastern form.

**Loggerhead Shrike—**

#2007-040 Ashland Co., 19 May 2007, Brady.

A pair of robin-sized gray and white birds with black masks, wings, and tail were noted. The black mask completely encompassed the eye, with no white separating the black mask from the gray crown. In addition, the black mask extended across the top of the upper beak, connecting to the mask of the other side of the face.

**Rock Wren—**

#2007-029 Milwaukee Co., 30 April 2007, Lubahn, Korducki, Prestby (photo), Gustafson; 1 May 2007, Lubahn (photo), Gustafson, Franke (photo), Hambley (photo), Tessen; 2 May 2007, T. Wood.

This medium-sized wren was grayish-sandy brown in overall coloration. Faint white speckling was discernible on the gray-brown back. The breast was pale grayish white, but the belly was distinctly buffy. The undertail coverts were strongly barred black and white. The face exhibited a faint darker eyeline beneath a light supercilium. In flight, a rusty rump and buffy distal outer tail edgings were evident.

This is Wisconsin's first record of a Rock Wren, bringing the state list to 429 species. A hypothetical record from Bayfield County on 11 October 2003 preceded this report.

**"Audubon's" Yellow-rumped Warbler—**

#2007-030 Milwaukee Co., 23 April 2007, Lubahn.

Noted in a group of Yellow-rumped Warblers, this bird caught observer's

attention due to the yellow throat. The head was entirely blue-black, lacking the white throat and white superciliary line. Only a white eyering could be discerned on the face. In other respects, it was similar to the "Myrtle" Yellow-rumps.

**Pine Warbler—**

#2007-047 Racine Co., 27 March 2007, Fare.

#2007-041 La Crosse Co., 28 March 2007, Ruhser.

#2007-042 Dane Co., 28 March 2007, Lohre.

#2007-048 Waukesha Co., 29 March 2007, Gustafson.

These warblers showed olive greenbacks, yellow throats and breasts, white wingbars, faded dark streaks on the yellow breasts, and white undertail coverts. In the instances of vocalization, a fainter, Chipping Sparrow-like trill was reported.

These four reports eclipse the previous early spring report from April 9<sup>th</sup>, a record from 1985!

**Yellow-throated Warbler—**

#2007-050 Eau Claire Co., 23 May 2007, Kaiser (photo).

Photographed at a bird bath, the slightly out of focus picture does reveal the small size to the bird, the overall grayish color above, white below, with a bright yellow throat, prominent black ear patch, white neck patch, white supercilium, and white wingbars.

Although this species is fairly consistently reported in southern Wisconsin each spring, this report is unusually far north.

**Western Tanager—**

#2007-031 Clark Co., 26 April 2007, Farris.

#2007-032 Portage Co., 14 May 2007, Schaufenbuel.

This yellowish bird was larger than a warbler with dark wings and tail. Light wingbars were also evident. The bill was shorter and heavier than that of an oriole. The face around the bill was bright red, while the rest of the head was yellow.

**Chipping Sparrow—**

#2007-033 Milwaukee Co., 4 March 2007.

This sparrow was a feeder visitor, thought to be the size of a House Sparrow, with a relatively long tail and slender build. It had a rufous crown, white superciliary line, and dark eye-line. The grayish breast was unmarked. White wingbars were also reported.

The plumage characteristics identify this bird as a Chipping Sparrow, although the size of the bird was more consistent with an American Tree Sparrow.

**Harris' Sparrow—**

#2007-046 Racine Co., 26 March 2007, Fare.

This sparrow was larger than a Song Sparrow with a pink bill, black head, black face, black bib, and white underparts from breast to tail.

**Painted Bunting—**

#2007-036 Milwaukee Co., 10 May 2007, T. Wood.

Initially the observer thought the bright red spot on the lawn would be a Scarlet Tanager. Raising the binoculars for "a three second look," the blue head, green back, and brilliant red

underparts could only describe a Painted Bunting.

Interestingly, 6 of Wisconsin's 12 spring records of Painted Bunting fall between 10–13 May.

**Great-tailed Grackle—**

#2007-035 Grant Co., 3 May 2007, Romano.

In direct comparison to Blue-winged Teal, this bird was longer; in comparison to Red-winged Blackbirds, it was twice as long; next to a Common Grackle, it was 50% longer. The long tail was strikingly keel-shaped. Its eyes were yellow; its crown very flattened, the crown and upper edge of the bill forming a straight line. Vocalization was described as a loud, slurred whistle.

**OLD ACCEPTED RECORDS**

**Barrow's Goldeneye—**

#2006-102 Sheboygan Co., 5 March 2006, T. Wood.

This female goldeneye looked very similar to the Common Goldeneyes. The overall color was gray, broken by a white patch on the folded wing. The brown head was slightly darker than the other goldeneyes with the expected yellow eye. In addition, the forehead rose more steeply than the forehead on a Common Goldeneye. The most obvious difference between the two species was the smaller, all yellow bill, lacking the length and proximal grayness of the Common Goldeneye's bill.

**Eurasian Wigeon—**

#2006-013 Sheboygan Co., 24, 25 March 2006, T. Wood.

This wigeon had a red-brown head with a creamy forehead, a maroon breast, and gray flanks and back.

**Cinnamon Teal—**

#2006-012 Ozaukee Co., 12 May 2006, T. Wood.

Easily seen were the overall orange-brown body and face, along with a light blue wing speculum, a dark bill that was longer than that of the nearby Blue-winged Teal. Completing the important differences were a red eye and yellow legs.

**Glossy Ibis—**

#2006-014 Dodge Co., 12 May 2006, T. Wood.

The important limited white facial skin edging was evident on this dark ibis. It did not extend around the eye, instead limiting itself to the cheek and forehead.

**Purple Sandpiper—**

#2006-093 Sheboygan Co., 20 December 2006, Tessen (photo).

The plump, short-legged, purplish-gray bird exhibited a long orangish bill with drooping at the tip.

**Black-throated Gray Warbler—**

#2005-107 Door Co., 31 August 2005, Stover.

This warbler was gray backed, white breasted, and had two white wingbars. The head had a black crown, white superciliary line, black mask over the eye, a white moustachial stripe, and a black chin/throat. The yellow lore spot was not detectable. Completing the report were black streaks on the flanks.

This is Wisconsin's fourth record.

**NOT ACCEPTED**

**Glossy Ibis—**

#2007-012 Fond du Lac Co., 19 May 2007.

Simply described as “a larger bird” without any specific size reference, this reporter added that the bill was light and drooped. The general body plumage was indicated to be “glossy” and green. The eye was reported as dark, but specific mention was made of “no white border,” a characteristic of immature *Plegadis Ibis*, a stage at which it is difficult to make a species identification.

This was the only report of a seemingly immature bird among the numerous Glossy Ibis reports at Horicon NWR this spring.

**Broad-winged Hawk—**

#2007-043 Eau Claire Co., 16 March 2007.

This bird was observed from a vehicle moving 65 mph, with the bird seen from the back, perched in shade rather than sunlight. It could not be seen from the front under the conditions described.

The identification was based on a perceived size smaller than a crow, a tail too short for an accipiter, a body too chunky for an accipiter, a fairly uniform dark brown back, and one white tail band as wide as the dark terminal band was.

The conditions of this observation make it precarious to accept the bird as well seen. At 65 mph, with a few glances at the bird, and the bird perched in shade on a sunny day, the reported traits may not have been clearly seen. There is also a presumption that the last white band on a Red-shouldered Hawk is difficult to see.

Photographic evidence suggests that assumption isn't entirely accurate (Fig. 1). Mid-March is the expected arrival time for red-shoulders in Wisconsin. Broad-wings are starting to reach south Texas at this time. The acceptance of a report so out of character for this species would require better viewing conditions and an examination of other characteristics of the bird including the breast markings, and head coloration. It wouldn't be impossible for a Broad-wing Hawk to fail to leave the southern U.S. for the winter, but it certainly would be unusual. Based on reports or the lack of them from other areas of the Midwest, careful scrutiny of any small March *buteo* should be encouraged.

A number of observers apparently reported seeing Broad-winged Hawks this spring. This is the only report actually submitted with written documentation. In spite of prompting on the Internet sites, no one else had the confidence(?) to submit a report.

It is also of note, that Wisconsin, in sharp contrast to the rest of the midwest, has at least 34 records of March Broad-winged Hawks for the state dating from the mid 1940s through present time. There are no accepted records for March in surrounding states. In an inspection of the literature pertaining to these reports, Domagalski discovered that all reports are single observer reports, none of them is supported with any written documentation appearing in print, and none of these reports has ever passed through Records Committee inspection (the committee formed in 1978). The geographic pattern of these reports blankets the entire state.

If any original documentation exists for any of the previous reports of

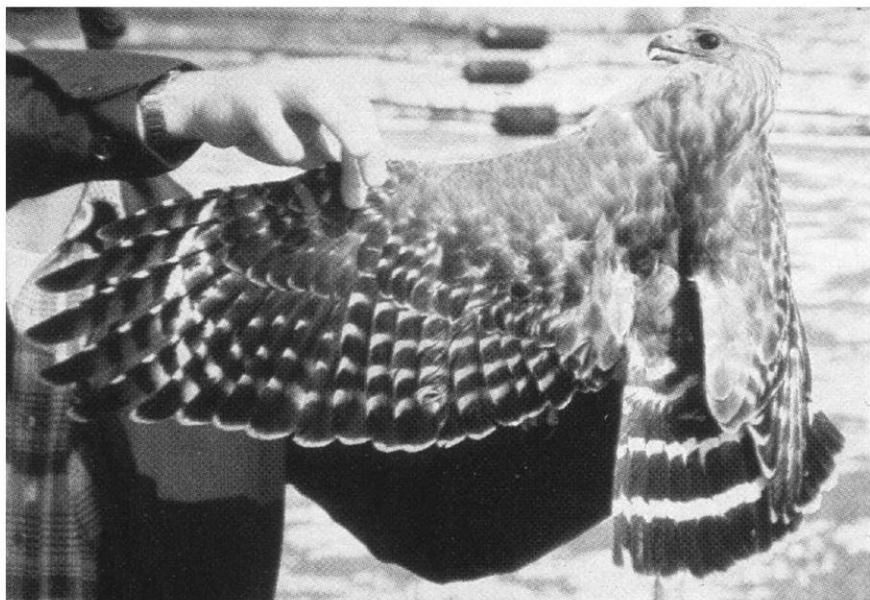


Figure 1. Hand-held Red-shouldered Hawk; note white terminal tail band. Photo was scanned from an American Birding Association booklet on hawks, original photo by William S. Clark.

March Broad-winged Hawks, the Records Committee would appreciate receiving copies of this information.

In the future, it is best to consider any March or even early April sighting of a Broad-winged Hawk as a circumstance necessitating full documentation to help us elucidate the spring migration of this long-distance migrant. If we are seeing a pattern of distribution/migration not evident elsewhere, we need much better evidence for it.

#### **Whooping Crane—**

#2007-016 Marathon Co., 7 April 2007.

#2007-015 Jefferson Co., 19 May 2007.

Although these reports adequately describe Whooping Cranes, the status of this species in Wisconsin remains

that of released birds. This forces “rejection” of these reports as wild origin birds.

#### **Black-headed Gull—**

#2007-037 Sheboygan Co., 30 May 2007.

This bird was described as larger than the Bonaparte’s Gulls. Its bill was viewed briefly as it preened and described as larger and “lighter colored.” Its tip was described as slightly drooped. The mantle and wings were gray with “black in the outer primaries” and a black spot was seen behind the eyes. Brief raising of the wings revealed “dark in the outer areas.” The legs were described as “light.” The tail had a broken black terminal band. At another point in the description, the bill was described again as “lighter col-

ored” then in parentheses (orange-red) immediately after that “lighter colored” statement.

The description of the bill as “lighter colored” seems unexpected for a reddish bill, the “orange-red bill” seemingly an afterthought or assumption—in writing the report. The underwings on a Black-headed Gull are dark, but have a significant white patch on the outer primaries—a trait not noted in this report.

Of interest in this report is the indication that this “Black-headed Gull” has observed on a specific pier for perhaps 10–15 minutes. After a couple of minutes looking elsewhere, the observer’s attention came back to this pier, only to see no sign of the “Black-headed Gull,” but a Black-legged Kittiwake taking flight from this same location and heading out into the lake.

Circumstantially, this is a bit unusual. Given the similarity in size of the two birds, the “lighter colored” bill with a drooped tip repeated twice in the Black-headed Gull description, and the lack of notation of the white underside patch to the outer primaries of the Black-headed Gull, doubt about the identity of this bird is created. The legs were briefly noted as “light” at the end of the report rather than the black of the kittiwake. Although it doesn’t exactly describe the Black-legged Kittiwake in the area, it also isn’t describing a Black-headed Gull in convincing terms. Information about the direction of view and lighting conditions is not available from the report to assist in interpreting these apparent inconsistencies. The lack of specific bill color in the report and the use of “light colored” suggest

a poor lighting situation, perhaps looking toward the sun???

#### **Barn Owl—**

#2007-024 Dane Co., 3 March 2007.

The description was limited to white underwings and light brown upperwings. This bird flew differently than a Short-eared Owl in the observer’s estimation. With the limited wording, there isn’t enough information to conclude it was an owl, nor what size it was. The face was not described.

#### **Boreal Owl—**

#2007-023 Bayfield Co., 31 March 2007.

Based solely on a different “winnowing” call, this identification, as most “heard only” reports, is difficult to assess. Although two observers assert that it sounded like a tape from Cornell University, no actual description and comparison of this sound to anything else is made. Without records of it for others to listen directly to, this sort of report cannot be easily evaluated or accepted.

Circumstantially, the early date, coinciding with Boreal Owl migration and the apparent habitat described do support the very real possibility of a Boreal Owl being heard.

#### **Common Nighthawk—**

#2007-25 Dane Co., 2 April 2007.

This uniformly dark-colored bird had slender pointed wings and a large white patch on the primaries. The zig-zag, floppy flight was also evident.

The description is convincingly a nighthawk, but there is a question about the species because of the early date of this sighting. The Common Nighthawk is a relatively late migrant



out of South America, while the Lesser Nighthawk migrates earlier from Central America and Mexico into the southwestern United States. The position of the white patches can be tough to evaluate, particularly if it isn't considered during the observation. This may well be a Common Nighthawk that didn't winter far enough south, but the Lesser's migratory patterns raise an interesting question that can't be completely dismissed.

**Blue Grosbeak—**

#2007-038 Door Co., 10 May 2007.

This report was briefly worded, suggesting an Evening Grosbeak-sized

bird, but no specific at-hand comparison was made to confirm the size indication. The wing was described as having rusty-red, gold, and dark blue coloration without specifying location or pattern to the coloring. The overall body color was not specifically indicated and any darker color around the bill base was not reported. The bill was "chunky," but color was again not reported.

There is almost enough here to document this bird as a Blue Grosbeak. In all likelihood, the inexperience with documentation efforts led to the incompleteness of an otherwise accurate identification.



Lesser Black-backed Gull posing for Scott Franke

# Lessons From the Seasons—Spring 2007

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A flurry of posts on the birdnet in April revolved around potential sightings of species not normally associated with early arrival in Wisconsin. Many birders entered into the exchanges regarding the identification marks. This lesson does not delve into the intricacies of the correct identification—that is the job of the Records Committee, but does take a closer look at the intricacies of migration.

The predominant factor determining when a neotropical migrant decides to move is day length. The farther south they spend the winter, the more they are tied into daylight as the primary migration cue. A Blackpoll Warbler munching on bugs in Trinidad or an American Golden-Plover resting on the paramo of Peru will not react in the slightest to a warm weather front entering Wisconsin on April 4. These migratory cues are hard-wired and long-lasting, but things can change. A small proportion of the sedentary House Finches released in New York from California has now developed migratory habits.

Other species are tempted to linger on the Gulf Coast due to a warming climate or a dramatic increase in feeders. These individuals have the capacity to change their wiring and adapt to the new conditions. Even with these changes, early movements of neotropical migrants are very rare and need to be put into context.

Below is a table of selected species (column 1) indicating the approximate record early arrival dates (column 2), a phenological listing from Wayne Rhode indicating average first arrival dates in southern Wisconsin (column 3), and when the bulk of the migrants are expected to arrive in southern Wisconsin (final column). Most birders will see their first bird during the times of heavy movement. A final caveat—southern Wisconsin is not a straight line across the state. The cooling effects of Lake Michigan oftentimes delay movement in spring, whereas, warming along the Mississippi River permits a bulge of movement north.

Table 1. Phenological Average First Arrival Dates in Wisconsin for Selected Species.

Species <sup>1</sup>	Record <sup>2</sup>	Ave. First Date <sup>3</sup>	Bulk of Migrants Arrive <sup>4</sup>
Early March			
Canada Goose	Winters	Winters	1–10 March
Red-winged Blackbird	Winters	Winters	1–10 March
American Woodcock	17 Feb	5 Mar	21–31 March
Mid-March			
Common Grackle	Winters	Winters	11–20 March
No. Saw-whet Owl	Winters	Winters	11–20 March
Sandhill Crane	30 Jan	15 Feb	11–20 March
Red-throated Loon	3 Feb	15 Mar	11–20 April
Eastern Phoebe	28 Feb	15 Mar	21–31 March
Late March			
Tundra Swan	Winters	25 Mar	1–10 April
Northern Shoveler	Winters	21 Mar	21–31 March
Gadwall	Winters	25 Mar	21–31 March
Ruddy Duck	Winters	25 Mar	1–10 April
Pied-billed Grebe	Winters	25 Mar	21–31 March
Horned Grebe	Winters	25 Mar	11–20 April
Killdeer	Winters	21 Mar	21–31 March
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Winters	25 Mar	21–30 April
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Winters	21 Mar	21–31 March
Eastern Bluebird	Winters	25 Mar	21–31 March
Tree Swallow	2 Mar	21 Mar	1–10 April
Fox Sparrow	Winters	25 Mar	1–10 April
Rusty Blackbird	Winters	25 Mar	11–20 April
Brewer's Blackbird	Winters	25 Mar	11–20 April
Eastern Meadowlark	Winters	25 Mar	1–10 April
Early April			
Green-winged Teal	Winters	1 Apr	1–10 April
Blue-winged Teal	Winters	1 Apr	11–20 April
Canvasback	Winters	1 Apr	1–10 April
Redhead	Winters	1 Apr	1–10 April
Lesser Scaup	Winters	1 Apr	1–10 April
Bufflehead	Winters	1 Apr	1–10 April
Hooded Merganser	Winters	1 Apr	1–10 April
Red-necked Grebe	24 Feb	1 Apr	11–20 April
Eared Grebe	7 Mar	5 Apr	21–31 May
Common Loon	18 Feb	1 Apr	1–10 April
American Bittern	14 Feb	1 Apr	1–10 May
Green Heron	26 Mar	5 Apr	11–20 May
Sora	1 Mar	5 Apr	21–30 April
Common Moorhen	23 Mar	5 Apr	1–10 May
Greater Yellowlegs	5 Mar	1 Apr	1–10 May
Wilson's Snipe	Winters	1 Apr	11–20 April
Bonaparte's Gull	2 Mar	1 Apr	21–30 April
<b>Purple Martin</b>	13 Mar	1 Apr	11–20 April
Winter Wren	Winters	Winters	1–10 April
Hermit Thrush	Winters	Winters	11–20 April
Brown Creeper	Winters	1 Apr	1–10 April
Golden-crowned Kinglet	Winters	1 Apr	1–10 April
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	20 Mar	5 Apr	11–20 April
Field Sparrow	Winters	5 Apr	11–20 April
Vesper Sparrow	14 Mar	5 Apr	11–20 April
Chipping Sparrow	7 Mar	5 Apr	11–20 April
Mid-April			
Greater Scaup	Winters	11 Apr	11–20 April
White-winged Scoter	Winters	11 Apr	11–20 April
Red-breasted Merganser	Winters	11 Apr	11–20 April

Table 1. Continued.

Species <sup>1</sup>	Record <sup>2</sup>	Ave. First Date <sup>3</sup>	Bulk of Migrants Arrive <sup>4</sup>
Great Egret	11 Mar	11 Apr	11–20 April
Osprey	2 Mar	15 Apr	21–30 April
Merlin	Winters	11 Apr	21–30 April
Lesser Yellowlegs	29 Feb	11 Apr	1–10 May
Barn Swallow	12 Mar	11 Apr	11–20 April
Louisiana Waterthrush	30 Mar	15 Apr	11–20 April
Yellow-rumped Warbler	Winters	11 Apr	21–30 April
Eastern Towhee	Winters	11 Apr	11–20 April
Savannah Sparrow	6 Mar	11 Apr	11–20 April
Swamp Sparrow	Winters	11 Apr	11–20 April
Late April			
<b>Broad-winged Hawk</b>	6 Mar	25 Apr	21–30 April
Virginia Rail	Winters	25 Apr	21–30 April
Solitary Sandpiper	13 Mar	25 Apr	1–10 May
Spotted Sandpiper	24 Mar	25 Apr	1–10 May
Willet	10 Apr	25 Apr	21–30 April
Pectoral Sandpiper	5 Mar	25 Apr	1–10 May
Common Tern	5 Apr	25 Apr	21–30 April
Forster's Tern	3 Apr	25 Apr	21–30 April
<b>Chimney Swift</b>	24 Mar	25 Apr	21–30 April
<b>Bank Swallow</b>	2 Apr	25 Apr	21–30 April
House Wren	31 Mar	25 Apr	1–10 May
Brown Thrasher	Winters	25 Apr	21–30 April
Gray Catbird	Winters	25 Apr	21–30 April
<b>Swainson's Thrush</b>	9 Apr	25 Apr	11–20 May
<b>Wood Thrush</b>	16 Apr	25 Apr	1–10 May
Orange-crowned Warbler	14 Apr	25 Apr	1–10 May
Nashville Warbler	18 Apr	25 Apr	1–10 May
Pine Warbler	8 Apr	25 Apr	21–30 April
Black-and-white Warbler	4 Apr	25 Apr	1–10 May
Palm Warbler	24 Mar	25 Apr	1–10 May
Northern Waterthrush	9 Apr	25 Apr	1–10 May
Lark Sparrow	9 Apr	25 Apr	21–30 April
White-throated Sparrow	Winters	25 Apr	1–10 May
Lapland Longspur	Winters	Winters	21–30 April
Yellow-headed Blackbird	20 Mar	25 Apr	21–30 April
First May			
Least Bittern	15 Apr	1 May	11–20 May
<b>American Golden-Plover</b>	22 Mar	1 May	11–20 May
Black-bellied Plover	12 Apr	1 May	21–31 May
Semipalmated Plover	30 Mar	1 May	11–20 May
<b>Upland Sandpiper</b>	28 Mar	1 May	1–10 May
Sanderling	19 Apr	5 May	21–31 May
<b>Semipalmated Sandpiper</b>	28 Mar	1 May	11–20 May
Least Sandpiper	4 Apr	1 May	11–20 May
Dunlin	29 Mar	5 May	21–31 May
Short-billed Dowitcher	21 Apr	5 May	11–20 May
Long-billed Dowitcher	12 Apr	5 May	21–30 Apr & 21–31 May
<b>Wilson's Phalarope</b>	11 Apr	5 May	11–20 May
<b>Black Tern</b>	1 Apr	5 May	11–20 May
<b>Common Nighthawk</b>	1 Apr	5 May	11–20 May
Whip-poor-will	2 Apr	5 May	1–10 May
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	12 Apr	5 May	1–10 May
<b>Olive-sided Flycatcher</b>	27 Apr	5 May	21–31 May
<b>Eastern Wood-Pewee</b>	10 Apr	5 May	1–10 May
<b>Least Flycatcher</b>	10 Apr	5 May	1–10 May

(Continued)

Table 1. Continued.

Species <sup>1</sup>	Record <sup>2</sup>	Ave. First Date <sup>3</sup>	Bulk of Migrants Arrive <sup>4</sup>
<b>Great Crested Flycatcher</b>	2 Apr	5 May	1–10 May
<b>Eastern Kingbird</b>	25 Mar	5 May	1–10 May
<b>Yellow-throated Vireo</b>	18 Mar	5 May	1–10 May
Blue-headed Vireo	13 Apr	1 May	1–10 May
<b>Warbling Vireo</b>	17 Apr	1 May	1–10 May
Sedge Wren	21 Mar	5 May	11–20 May
Marsh Wren	8 Apr	5 May	11–20 May
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	30 Mar	1 May	1–10 May
Blue Jay	Winters	Winters	1–10 May
<b>Veery</b>	17 Apr	5 May	11–20 May
<b>Gray-cheeked Thrush</b>	16 Apr	5 May	11–20 May
American Pipit	15 Mar	5 May	21–31 May
<b>Blue-winged Warbler</b>	19 Apr	1 May	1–10 May
<b>Golden-winged Warbler</b>	6 Apr	5 May	11–20 May
<b>Tennessee Warbler</b>	20 Apr	1 May	1–10 May
<b>Northern Parula</b>	18 Mar	5 May	11–20 May
<b>Chestnut-sided Warbler</b>	17 Apr	5 May	1–10 May
<b>Yellow Warbler</b>	16 Apr	1 May	1–10 May
<b>Magnolia Warbler</b>	18 Apr	5 May	11–20 May
<b>Cape May Warbler</b>	23 Apr	5 May	11–20 May
<b>Black-throated Blue Warbler</b>	24 Apr	5 May	11–20 May
<b>Black-throated Green Warbler</b>	9 Apr	1 May	1–10 May
<b>Blackburnian Warbler</b>	18 Apr	5 May	11–20 May
<b>Blackpoll Warbler</b>	25 Apr	5 May	11–20 May
<b>American Redstart</b>	7 Apr	1 May	1–10 May
<b>Prothonotary Warbler</b>	13 Apr	1 May	1–10 May
<b>Ovenbird</b>	31 Mar	1 May	1–10 May
Common Yellowthroat	9 Apr	1 May	1–10 May
<b>Hooded Warbler</b>	27 Mar	1 May	1–10 May
<b>Wilson's Warbler</b>	20 Apr	5 May	11–20 May
<b>Scarlet Tanager</b>	13 Apr	5 May	11–20 May
<b>Rose-breasted Grosbeak</b>	14 Apr	1 May	1–10 May
<b>Indigo Bunting</b>	11 Apr	5 May	11–20 May
Clay-colored Sparrow	29 Mar	1 May	1–10 May
Grasshopper Sparrow	13 Apr	1 May	1–10 May
Henslow's Sparrow	30 Mar	5 May	11–20 May
Le Conte's Sparrow	29 Mar	5 May	11–20 May
Lincoln's Sparrow	5 Apr	5 May	11–20 May
Harris's Sparrow	26 Apr	5 May	11–20 May
White-crowned Sparrow	Winters	5 May	11–20 May
<b>Baltimore Oriole</b>	2 Apr	5 May	1–10 May
Mid May			
Yellow Rail	29 Mar	11 May	11–20 May
<b>Stilt Sandpiper</b>	13 Apr	11 May	11–20 May
<b>Hudsonian Godwit</b>	8 Apr	11 May	11–20 May
<b>Black-billed Cuckoo</b>	12 Apr	11 May	21–31 May
<b>Alder Flycatcher</b>	20 Apr	15 May	11–20 May
<b>Willow Flycatcher</b>	27 Apr	15 May	11–20 May
<b>Acadian Flycatcher</b>	2 May	11 May	11–20 May
<b>Yellow-bellied Flycatcher</b>	1 Apr	15 May	11–20 May
<b>Red-eyed Vireo</b>	16 Apr	11 May	11–20 May
<b>Philadelphia Vireo</b>	27 Apr	11 May	11–20 May
<b>Bay-breasted Warbler</b>	17 Apr	11 May	11–20 May
<b>Cerulean Warbler</b>	23 Apr	11 May	11–20 May
<b>Connecticut Warbler</b>	25 Apr	15 May	21–31 May
<b>Mourning Warbler</b>	30 Apr	15 May	21–31 May

Table 1. Continued.

Species <sup>1</sup>	Record <sup>2</sup>	Ave. First Date <sup>3</sup>	Bulk of Migrants Arrive <sup>4</sup>
<b>Canada Warbler</b>	3 Apr	11 May	11–20 May
<b>Bobolink</b>	12 Apr	11 May	<i>11–20 May</i>
<b>Orchard Oriole</b>	16 Apr	11 May	11–20 May
End May			
<b>Whimbrel</b>	8 May	25 May	21–31 May
<b>Ruddy Turnstone</b>	25 Apr	25 May	21–31 May
<b>Red Knot</b>	5 May	25 May	21–31 May
<b>White-rumped Sandpiper</b>	13 Apr	21 May	<i>21–31 May</i>
<b>Baird's Sandpiper</b>	14 Apr	21 May	<i>21–31 May</i>
<b>Yellow-billed Cuckoo</b>	22 Apr	25 May	21–31 May
<b>Dickcissel</b>	30 Mar	25 May	21–31 May

Footnotes:

1. Species in bold are primarily long-distance neotropical migrants. Extremely small numbers survive wintering along the Gulf Coast. These survivors would constitute the primary opportunists attempting exceptionally early migration in Wisconsin.
2. Record arrival dates from Wisconsin. These dates are always in flux and more recent records are not reflected.
3. Average arrival dates modified from Wayne Rohde's internet listing. These dates reflect averages for first arrivals for southern Wisconsin.
4. Average dates for the bulk of the migrants. If a species *in italics* is seen much earlier than listed, extra precautions in documenting the sighting are warranted.]



This Dark-eyed Junco was found in a spruce by Scott Franke.



Eastern Towhee in Waushara County in April 2007 by Dennis Malueg

# The Spring Season: 2007

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**R**ereading the introductory remarks for last spring's report, I realized I could almost have copied them verbatim and still come up with a fair description of this spring as well. Jim Frank in Ozaukee County considered shorebird numbers as "very weak in spite of reasonable habitat," a sentiment echoed by Daryl Tessen in Outagamie County. Ryan Brady in Ashland County, again seconded by Tessen, characterized the warbler migration as "poor to extremely poor." However, rather more observers this year appeared to take exception to the prevailing trend, with Brady finding shorebird numbers "excellent due to extremely low water levels on Lake Superior" and Frank pronouncing "good fallouts and good variety" of warblers. Ellen Hansen in Dane County and Robbye Johnson in Douglas County emphasized an "all or nothing" flavor to the season—some common species could barely be found, whereas others occurred in numbers not seen for years.

## WEATHER AND BIRDS

More people included comments on the weather with their reports than has been the case the last few years, so I can present a better picture this time

around. March started off with a cold and snowy first week. It only reached 22° in Milwaukee County on 6 March. Sandhill Cranes were not noted at the beginning of the period for the first time since 1996. On the other hand, Killdeer migrated early and paid the price. One poignant example in particular was related by Scott Diehl in Milwaukee County on 7 March: "I think we all wondered what price the Killdeer that pushed northward into Wisconsin last weekend were going to pay for what appeared to human eyes to be a mistake on their part. We found out what happened to at least 13 of them: 12 were found dead and 1 found barely alive, clustered on the Lake Michigan shore near a storm sewer effluent pipe. The bird found alive clung to life for a few hours at our rehabilitation center but then did succumb to emaciation."

The rest of the month was warmer and drier, with highs pushing into the low 80s in the southern part of the state by the last week. April was a bit cooler than normal on average, with a major snowstorm on 11 April, dumping 7" on Milwaukee County for example. Jim Frank had a significant and extended fallout of Brown Creepers and Golden-crowned Kinglets in Mil-



waukee and Ozaukee Counties throughout much of the month, tallying 27, 16, and 11 of the former species on 5, 12, and 22 April respectively and an amazing 52 of the latter in one county on one day, 5 April, in Milwaukee County.

As was the case for March, once again it got into the 80s by month's end, setting the tone for a generally warm and dry May. Karen Etter Hale recorded 7 days over 85° in Jefferson County. Winds were clearly favorable for neotropical migrants on 8 and 9 May, judging by the number of first arrival dates on those two days. In general though most observers complained fallouts were few and far between, with Raymond Dischler in Columbia County for example viewing the migration as essentially over by 21 May with the "onset of summer-like south winds." Robbye Johnson, on the other hand, was still enjoying "late warblers with the hundreds of vireos" on the last day of the month in Douglas County. And Jim Frank was marveling over seeing *eleven* species of gulls along the Lake Michigan shoreline in May. As usual, it was all about timing and location!

### RARITIES

The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology Records Committee voted favorably on reports for the following unusual species or forms (numbers in parentheses refer to the number of distinct locations involved, not the total number of reports accepted): Eurasian Wigeon, Cinnamon × Blue-winged Teal (2), Barrow's Goldeneye (3), Western Grebe, Glossy Ibis (2), Black Vulture, Black Rail, Black-necked Stilt, Laugh-

ing Gull (4), Slaty-backed Gull [continuation from the winter], Black-legged Kittiwake, Eurasian Collared-Dove (2), White-winged Dove, Barn Owl, nighthawk sp., Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (2), Rock Wren, "Audubon's" Yellow-rumped Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler (2), Western Tanager (2), Painted Bunting, and Great-tailed Grackle. The last was from a different location [Grant County] than the bird that had overwintered in Dodge County (and which lingered into the spring); thus, it constituted a second state record, hard on the heels of the first. It was trumped however by the Milwaukee County Rock Wren, the state's first accepted record of that species. The Black Rail becomes the fourth accepted record. The Black Vulture and White-winged Dove are the seventh records for each of those species. See the species accounts and "By the Wayside" for details.

The Committee also considered reports for three common species that were unusually early. Something truly extraordinary happened with Pine Warbler: the old first arrival date of 8 April [set in 2001 in Dane County] was obliterated with the astounding appearance of no fewer than 4 [!] birds in 4 different counties between 27 and 29 March. This event rivals the extraordinary fallout of Hooded Warblers in 1950, when once again 4 individuals in 4 counties were seen between 27 March and 8 April. The second "early bird," if it was that, was a 4 March Chipping Sparrow in Milwaukee County; this would be record early by 3 days if truly a migrant, but an increasing number of overwintering records are beginning to blur this distinction fast! And a Caspian Tern in Racine County seen on 30 March is

the second earliest date ever for that species.

Finally, the Committee accepted 3 reports of species considerably outside their usual range in Wisconsin: Loggerhead Shrike in Ashland County, Bell's Vireo in Douglas County, and Harris's Sparrow in Racine County.

#### **ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES**

In addition to the Pine Warbler mentioned above, one other species set an all-time early arrival record, with one of the two reported Western Tanagers turning up on 26 April and thus besting the old record by 1 day. With a 22 March arrival, Black-crowned Night-Heron tied its earliest arrival date. And second earliest ever arrival dates were set or tied for Piping Plover, Franklin's Gull, and Willow Flycatcher, in addition to the Caspian Tern already mentioned.

At the other extreme, the 10 May latest spring Black-legged Kittiwake record, set just last year, was extended to 31 May. A first summer record sits before the Records Committee at this writing. And Fox Sparrow tied its earliest ever spring departure date of 27 April.

#### **REINTRODUCTIONS AND EXOTICS**

Whooping Cranes were reported five times. Gustafson saw 3 adults flying overhead in Racine County on 3 April. Peck discovered one in a cornfield, calling at passing Sandhill Cranes, in Marathon County on 7 April. Over a month went by and then birds were reported on three successive days. First Hale reported 2 birds in a field in Jefferson County, with

Sandhill Cranes eventually coming in to join them, on 17 May. Then Tessen noted 2 more individuals in Juneau County on 18 May. Finally, Smith reported 2 birds in flight in Jefferson County on 19 May, perhaps the same birds Hale had seen two days earlier.

Numerous Great Tit sightings in Milwaukee County in recent years were reduced to a single report, of 1 bird, on 19 March (Bontly). No other reports of exotic species were received.

#### **STATISTICS**

Seventy-one observers submitted written reports to the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology. Their reports were fleshed out by adding some from 8 Wisconsin Bird Network and 8 more eBird reporters, for a grand total of 89 contributors and cited observers [observer "teams" being counted as a single observer]. Seventy-six county reports consisted of what I have been calling "comprehensive" coverage of a county; that is, each totals 25 or more species in that county. Of Wisconsin's 72 counties, 43 were covered by one or more such reports. Dane and Milwaukee Counties tied for the most with 5 reports each, followed by Burnett and Winnebago Counties with 4 apiece. An additional 16 counties received "incidental" coverage, i.e. reports of fewer than 25 species only. That leaves the following 13 counties unrepresented in this season's report: Buffalo, Iron, Langlade, Menominee, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, Price, Sawyer, Shawano, Trempealeau, Waupaca, and Waushara Counties.

The total number of species seen was 313, the same number as last year.



Western Sandpiper and Townsend's Solitaire were probably the most prominent missing species. Intriguing reports on the Wisconsin Bird Network of California Gull, Chuck-will's-widow (in Vernon County for the fourth straight year), Western Kingbird, and Lark Bunting were not followed up and thus fell by the wayside.

### THE ACCOUNTS

These 26 widespread, common, and mostly sedentary species are not included in the species accounts: Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Mallard, Ring-necked Pheasant, Cooper's

Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, American Crow, Horned Lark, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Northern Cardinal, House Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

Abbreviations: BOP = beginning of period; EOP = end of period; TTP = throughout the period; WSO = Wisconsin Society for Ornithology.

## REPORTS

(1 March—31 May 2007)

**Greater White-fronted Goose**—Reported first from Dane County on 4 March (Stutz). Tessen had 200 in Columbia County on 17 March and was still able to find 20 in Dane County as late as 19 April. Brady had the last of 12 county reports on 1 May in Bayfield County.

**Snow Goose**—Reported from 9 counties, with no more than 2 individuals mentioned in any report. The dates spanned the period 11 March (Dane County, Stutz) to 21 May (Oconto County, Smiths).

**Ross's Goose**—In chronological order, reports came from Dane (11 March), Dodge, Lafayette, St. Croix, and Outagamie (23 April) Counties. The maximum number was 11, found on 13 March in Dodge County by Tessen.

**Cackling Goose**—As in 2006, a line from Grant to Oconto Counties encompassed all but 1 of the county reports, a 3 May report from Bayfield County (Brady) providing the exception (as well as the latest report). The earliest was 4 March (Dane County, Tessen). There were reports from 14 counties. A. Holschbach had 12 in Sauk County on 9 March.

**Trumpeter Swan**—Reports came in from 15 counties, including Waukesha, Manitowoc, and Oconto Counties in the eastern part of the state. As usual, some overwintered in St. Croix (Persico) and Douglas (LaValleys) Counties. Tessen reported the largest concentration, 70 individuals in Burnett County on 29 May.

**Tundra Swan**—Also reported from 15 counties, but much more heavily biased towards the eastern half of the state. There were reports on 3 March from Rock (Yoerger) and Dane (Stutz) Counties. Concentrations exceeding 200 individuals were found near the end of March in Marinette (Campbell) and Bayfield (Brady) Counties. Yoerger found the last one of the season, again in Rock County, on 12 May.

**Wood Duck**—In Dane and Iowa Counties on 3 March (Stutz, A. Holschbach) for the earliest reports. Stutz reported 20 in Crawford and 30 in Grant Counties on 15 April.

**Gadwall**—Reported at BOP in Waukesha (Gustafson) and St. Croix (Persico) Counties, with Dane and Rock Counties following on 2 and 3 March. A. Holschbach counted 335 in

Sauk County on 24 March. Still to be found in Dodge County on 25 May (Gustafson).

**Eurasian Wigeon**—A male was present in Outagamie County from 6 to 9 April (J. Shillinglaw et al). See "By the Wayside."

**American Wigeon**—Turned up in Rock County on 3 March (Yoerger), where it remained until 5 May (one of the later departure dates). The Smiths counted 56 individuals in Oconto County on 1 April.

**American Black Duck**—Seventeen scattered county reports, with a maximum of 8 individuals given by the Smiths in Oconto County on 13 March. Found TTP in Sheboygan (Brassers) and Manitowoc (Sontag) Counties.

**Blue-winged Teal**—A cluster of mid-March reports began in Kenosha County on 13 March (Hoffmann). Stutz had 200 individuals in Grant County on 15 April.

**Blue-winged × Cinnamon Teal**—Two reports of differently plumaged males surfaced this season. A. Holschbach described an individual in Sauk County on 6 April; on 14 April, Gustafson discovered another in Waukesha County. See "By the Wayside."

**Northern Shoveler**—Persico reported it at BOP in St. Croix County. It next appeared in Dane County on 6 March (Evanson). Ziebell reported 170 in Winnebago County on 3 April.

**Northern Pintail**—Reported from 19 counties, including a BOP report in Door County (Lukes). Frank had a maximum count of 320 in Dodge County on 15 March. A late Jefferson County report (26 May, Hale) was noteworthy.

**Green-winged Teal**—Present from 2 March to EOP in Manitowoc County (Sontag). Two reports of 150 individuals were filed, first from Outagamie County on 6 April (Tessen), then from Bayfield County on 21 April (Brady). Also found late in Jefferson County by Hale, on 22 May.

**Canvasback**—There was a concentration of 620 individuals in Winnebago County on 28 March (Ziebell). Reported from 25 counties.

**Redhead**—Reported from 28 counties, with Brady recording the most at 400 individuals in Bayfield County on 17 April. Triple digit counts were also registered in Winnebago and Marinette Counties.

**Ring-necked Duck**—First appeared in Dane County on 3 March, where it remained until 5 May (Stutz). The same observer also noted it in Jackson and Wood Counties on 19 May. A. Holschbach counted 208 individuals in Sauk County on 15 March. Appeared in 33 counties.

**Greater Scaup**—Among the 18 reporting counties, inland ones were better represented than is sometimes the case. Tessen reported over 10,000 in Manitowoc County on 11 March, but this figure was dwarfed by an astounding 44,500 found by the Smiths in Oconto County on 8 April.

**Lesser Scaup**—Thirty-two county reports were filed. The biggest day came on 15 April, when Stutz had 8,000 birds in Grant County, with another 800 in Crawford County thrown in for good measure.

**Harlequin Duck**—Reported on and off TTP in Ozaukee and Sheboygan Counties, with 3 individuals remaining in the former (Frank) and at least 1 in the latter (Gustafson) at EOP. The summer report bears watching, as there are but 3 previous records into June.

**Surf Scoter**—With but 2 previous records into June, the 30 and 31 May Manitowoc and Bayfield County reports (Tessen and Brady) are noteworthy. Also found in Ozaukee (22 March) and Racine (27 April) Counties.

**White-winged Scoter**—Found in Rock County on 3 March (Yoerger), in Manitowoc County on 11 March (Tessen), and in Douglas County on 7 May (Johnson).

**Black Scoter**—Appeared in Ozaukee County on 22 March (Tessen). Brady found it in Bayfield County between 27 March and 4 May (Fig. 1). Like the previous species, there was an inland report, with a bird in Dodge and Fond du Lac Counties between 11 and 20 May (Tessen).

**Long-tailed Duck**—Appeared only in 6 Lake Michigan counties, with Frank managing the highest count of individuals (480) in Ozaukee County on 8 March. Departed Sheboygan County on 1 May (Tessen) for the latest report.

**Bufflehead**—Brady counted 100 in Bayfield County on 17 April. Still in Sheboygan (Brassers) and Manitowoc (Sontag) Counties on 28 May.



Figure 1. This photo of a Black Scoter on Chequamegon Bay at Short Bridge in Bayfield County was taken on 27 March 2007 by Ryan Brady.

**Common Goldeneye**—Ziebell counted 500 in Winnebago County on 10 March [compare with 1,800 he found there on 12 March 2006]. Frank and Gustafson reported it still present in Ozaukee County on 31 May.

**Barrow's Goldeneye**—Two individuals were in Milwaukee County on 3 March (T. Wood), with another bird in Sheboygan County reported the same day (Brassers). In addition, Brady reported it in Bayfield County between 24 and 31 March (Fig. 2). All reports referred to adult males.

**Hooded Merganser**—Reported at BOP in Kenosha, Racine, Milwaukee, St. Croix, and Bayfield Counties. The Smiths tallied 38 in Oconto County on 27 March.

**Common Merganser**—Widespread at BOP. Ziebell counted 620 in Winnebago County on 7 April. Reported at EOP in Bayfield County (Brady).

**Red-breasted Merganser**—Reported at BOP in Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee Counties. Ziebell had 340 in Winnebago County on 6 April. Still in Green, Sheboygan, and Manitowoc Counties at or near EOP.

**Ruddy Duck**—Appeared on 8 March in Dane (Yoerger) and Ozaukee (Frank) Counties. The Schwalbes reported 370 individuals in Columbia County on 20 April. In Manitowoc County at EOP (Sontag).

**Gray Partridge**—The books were cooked a bit by including an eBird report from Richland County on 4 March (Duerksen), as the species was not noted on any paper reports filed with the WSO.

**Ruffed Grouse**—Found in 13 counties, with Sauk and Green Lake Counties at the southern edge of the reported range.

**Spruce Grouse**—Paulios reported 6 individuals in Vilas County on 23 March for the only report.

**Sharp-tailed Grouse**—As usual, reported from Burnett, Douglas, and Bayfield Counties, with the LaValleys registering 52 birds in Douglas County on 10 April. Refreshing was an eBird report from one of the relict populations from elsewhere in the state, with 2 individuals seen by Betchkal in Taylor County on 25 April.

**Greater Prairie-Chicken**—Forty were found in Portage County on 14 April (Prestby). Betchkal had 8 in Marathon County on 28 April.

**Wild Turkey**—Evanston reported a flock of 110 birds in Jackson County on 5 March.

**Northern Bobwhite**—Reports came only from Richland, Sauk, Dane, Green, Rock, and Ozaukee Counties. No numbers were included on any of the reports.

**Red-throated Loon**—Reports from 5 Lake Michigan counties and Douglas County. Arrived

on 24 March in Ozaukee County (Evanston). On 7 May Johnson reported 7 in Douglas County, where it was still present at EOP.

**Common Loon**—First reported by Tessen on 11 March in Sheboygan County. The Schwalbes reported over 20 in Columbia County on 6 April.

**Pied-billed Grebe**—Ziebell reported the first in Winnebago County on 11 March. Five more counties followed in the next two days. The maximum reported was 35 in Sauk County on 7 April (A. Holschbach).

**Horned Grebe**—Present on 4 March in Sauk County (A. Holschbach); it departed there on 18 April. Brady counted 55 in Bayfield County on 17 April, with Tessen recording the last there for the season on 27 May. Reported from 17 counties.

**Red-necked Grebe**—The first of 11 county reports came on 22 March in Ozaukee County (Tessen). Brady had 36 individuals in Bayfield County on 17 April. Remained in Manitowoc County until 24 May (Sontag).

**Eared Grebe**—Romano and A. Holschbach (Fig. 3) reported an individual in Iowa County on 13 and 14 April. Sontag had the season's other report, in Manitowoc County on 23 April.

**Western Grebe**—Two late season reports: in Dane County on 25 May (Heikkinen &



Figure 2. This Barrow's Goldeneye was photographed by Ryan Brady on 27 March 2007 on Chequamegon Bay at Short Bridge in Bayfield County.



Figure 3. Eared Grebe in Iowa County was photographed on 14 April by Aaron Holschbach.

Unson, Stutz) and in Burnett County on 29 May (Tessen).

**American White Pelican**—Once again birds (2 this year) overwintered successfully in Brown County (Tessen). Romano sighted them in Grant County as early as 13 March. A figure of 600 was reached twice in Grant County, on 22 March (Romano) and on 15 April (Stutz). Present on 19 county reports.

**Double-crested Cormorant**—Eight individuals joined the pelicans overwintering in Brown County (Tessen). They were also present in Winnebago County at BOP, with Ziebell tallying about 3,000 there on 23 April.

**American Bittern**—Arrived on 19 April in Winnebago (Bruce) and Ashland/Bayfield (Brady) Counties. Tessen had 4 in Green Lake County on 28 April. Reported from 18 widely scattered counties.

**Least Bittern**—First noted in Grant County by Romano on 9 May. Also found in Sauk, Columbia, Fond du Lac, Oconto, Burnett, and Douglas Counties.

**Great Blue Heron**—Found at BOP in Iowa County (A. Holschbach). The next report came from Belter in Marathon County on 8 March. Ziebell counted 25 in Winnebago County on 12 May.

**Great Egret**—Notably early was a 29 March Winnebago County report (Tessen). Campbell next saw one in Marinette County on 2 April. The maximum count, by far, was 110 in Winnebago County (Ziebell) on 12 May. Recorded in 25 counties.

**Snowy Egret**—The season's single report was filed by the Baumanns in Brown County on 10 May.

**Little Blue Heron**—Horn reported an individual in Racine County on 27 April. See "By the Wayside."

**Cattle Egret**—Reported only by Thiessen in Dane County (25 April) and by Ziebell in Winnebago County (2 May).

**Green Heron**—Klubertanz's 14 April Rock County report preceded all others by over a week. Reported from 26 counties throughout the state.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron**—Ziebell's 22 March Winnebago County sighting ties for the earliest arrival on record [22 March 1956, Jefferson County]. He counted 200 individuals on 12 May. Grant County (9 May, Romano) was the only one of the 10 reporting counties from the western half of the state.

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**—Vargo reported one in Milwaukee County on 15 May.

**Glossy Ibis**—Reports of this species continue to increase, with sightings from two locations. Up to 8 individuals (Fig. 4) were present in Dodge/Fond du Lac Counties, with most of the many reports coming from 19 or 20 May (Freriks et. al). An individual was also seen in Grant County from 18 to 21 May (Cutright, Schultz). See "By the Wayside."

**Black Vulture**—The Baumanns registered Wisconsin's seventh (and first spring) record on 28 April in Manitowoc County. See "By the Wayside."

**Turkey Vulture**—First noted in Rock County (Yoerger) on 3 March. Stutz reported 30 individuals in Dane County on 10 March and again in Grant County on 15 April.

**Osprey**—Four reports came in before the end of March, the earliest on 24 March in Milwaukee County (Gustafson). Ziebell noted the second the next day in Winnebago County. The



Figure 4. These Glossy Ibis flying in at Horicon Marsh along Hwy 49 were taken by Pat Ready.

Smiths saw 5 in Oconto County on 6 May. Reported from 23 counties statewide.

**Bald Eagle**—Reported from 26 counties TTP. Leshner had 50 migrants in La Crosse County on 6 March. The high count was of 210 birds on Brady's hawk watch in Bayfield County on 24 March.

**Northern Harrier**—BOP reports from Kenosha (Hoffmann), Winnebago (Ziebell) and Manitowoc (Sontag) Counties; also found on 4 March in Washington County (Frank). Betchkal reported 10 in Burnett County on 24 May.

**Sharp-shinned Hawk**—Forty migrants flew past Brady in Bayfield County on 15 April.

**Northern Goshawk**—Indications that the species had pushed farther south than usual the preceding winter was evidenced by early March sightings in Grant (Romano) and Dane (Stutz) Counties. Uttech also found one in Ozaukee County on 7 May. Also reported from Green Lake, Manitowoc, Door, Florence, and Douglas Counties.

**Red-shouldered Hawk**—A. Holschbach filed a BOP report from Iowa County, where he also noted 4 individuals on 22 April. St. Croix, Oconto, and Door were the northernmost of the 13 reporting counties.

**Broad-winged Hawk**—Appeared on 15 April in Crawford (Stutz) and on 16 April in Douglas (LaValleys) Counties. Epstein counted 147 migrants in Monroe County on 29 April.

**Red-tailed Hawk**—Brady's maximum count of migrants in Bayfield County was 80, registered on 24 March.

**Rough-legged Hawk**—Remained in 19 counties into the season and seen last in Burnett County on 18 May (Paulios). Earlier, J. Schaufenbuel had seen 23 individuals there on 1 April.

**Golden Eagle**—Sightings in 6 counties spanned the period 17 March (Brady, Bayfield County) to 9 May (Smiths, Oconto County). Brady's seasonal maximum in Bayfield County was 11, seen on 18 March (Fig. 5).

**American Kestrel**—Brady counted 28 in Bayfield County on 31 March.





Figure 5. An adult Golden Eagle was photographed by Ryan Brady as it flew along the Lake Superior shoreline at Hebster in Bayfield County on 18 March 2007.

**Merlin**—Present TTP in Door (Lukes) and Ashland (Brady) Counties. The LaValleys recorded it in Douglas County from 12 March to EOP. Altogether, found in 14 mostly eastern counties.

**Yellow Rail**—Found in traditional haunts such as Burnett County (18 May, Paulios) and Marquette County (19 May, Stutz). And not for the first time, it was also found in Walworth County by Howe on 1 May (2 individuals); this site bears watching as a possible future location for the species.

**Black Rail**—Idzikowski was fortunate to see one at the Coast Guard Impoundment in Milwaukee on 8 May. Three of the 4 state records [Spring 2002, Fall 2003, Spring 2007] are held by this observer at this location! [The 4th was in Fall 2004 in Waukesha County by Michael Sears.] See "By the Wayside."

**King Rail**—Reported by Tessen on 28 April in Green Lake County and by Gustafson on 12 May in Dodge County.

**Virginia Rail**—Seen in 12 counties, beginning 10 April in Kenosha County (Hoffmann). Oconto County was the only one in the northern half of the state. Tessen counted 7 in Green Lake County on 28 April.

**Sora**—Reported from 23 counties, the earliest report coming from Stutz in Dane County on 2 April. Tessen reported 5 from Iowa County on 28 April.

**Common Moorhen**—Five reports, all in May, starting with a 6 May Winnebago County arrival (Ziebell). Also reported from Fond du Lac, Dodge, Rock, and Green Counties.

**American Coot**—BOP or very early March reports from Dane, Sauk, Winnebago, and St. Croix Counties. A. Holschbach reported over 4,100 individuals in Sauk County on 6 April. It was still present there at EOP.

**Sandhill Crane**—No reports before 3 March, on which date it was reported from Rock (Yoerger), Dane (Stutz), and Iowa (A. Holschbach) Counties. The greatest number of individuals given was 236, counted in Winnebago County by Ziebell on 12 May.

**Black-bellied Plover**—Reports were up substantially from last spring (14 counties vs. 8). The Brassers filed the first report, on 5 May in Sheboygan County. Present in Ashland/Bayfield Counties from 6 May to EOP, with the seasonal maximum of 16 individuals there on 24 May (Brady). Away from the Great Lakes, appeared mostly in south central counties.

**American Golden-Plover**—Tessen reported 6 individuals in Brown County on 9 May. He and Gustafson next encountered it in Dodge County on 11 May. A third report came from Columbia County on 19 May (Stutz), with Brady filing the last report on 20 May in Ashland/Bayfield Counties.

**Semipalmated Plover**—One April report, in Dane County on 28 April (Stutz). Ziebell counted 176 individuals in Winnebago County on 12 May. At EOP in Waukesha (Gustafson) and Manitowoc (Sontag) Counties.

**Piping Plover**—A bird in Eau Claire County on 19 and 20 April (Polk) was the second earliest arrival on record [the earliest, 15 April, was set in 2005 in Ozaukee County]. Brady saw it twice in Bayfield County, first on 4 May and then again from 24 to 26 May. In between, reported in Marinette County by Campbell on 14 May.

**Killdeer**—Already present in Racine (Gustafson) and Dane (Yoerger) Counties at BOP, with 5 more counties submitting reports on 2 March. This already brought it as far north as Door County. However, did not reach Douglas County until 1 April (Johnson). Ziebell counted 46 individuals in Winnebago County on 12 May.



Figure 6. American Avocet on Maslowski Beach along Chequamegon Bay in Ashland County on 21 May 2007, photo by Ryan Brady.

**Black-necked Stilt**—Fast becoming annual in spring, with a sighting for the fourth season in a row, as Polk came across one in Eau Claire County on 23 April.

**American Avocet**—Knispel recorded the earliest arrival in Winnebago County on 28 April. Yoerger saw a flock of 18 in Dane County on 3 May. Brady reported one in Bayfield County on 7 May and one in Ashland County (Fig. 6) for the period 21 through 28 May.

**Spotted Sandpiper**—The first arrival was recorded by Hoffmann in Kenosha County on 20 April. Stutz counted 20 in Dane County, where it had arrived on 28 April, on 5 May.

**Solitary Sandpiper**—Brady had both of the extreme dates in Ashland/Bayfield Counties, with an arrival on 22 April and a departure on 23 May (the latter date shared with Gustafson in Milwaukee County). Stutz recorded 12 individuals in Dane County on 5 May.

**Greater Yellowlegs**—Arrived on the fairly early date of 24 March (Columbia County,

Tessen); also recorded on 31 March in Rock County (Yoerger). A high count of 9 was obtained in Dane County on 3 May (Evanson). Last recorded on 27 May in Ozaukee County (Frank).

**Willet**—Evanson had 9 in Dane County on 23 April. Present in Manitowoc County until 25 May, with a maximum of 14 on the arrival date of 1 May (Sontag). Brady's 7 to 22 May span in Bayfield County included the seasonal high of 16 individuals on the arrival date. Finally, Bruce recorded it in Winnebago County from 18 to 23 May.

**Lesser Yellowlegs**—Arrived on 2 April in Dodge (Tessen) and Winnebago (Bruce) Counties. There were 40 in Dane County on 5 May (Stutz). Frank recorded the departure date of 27 May in Ozaukee County.

**Upland Sandpiper**—Hoffmann's 2 individuals in Kenosha County on 15 April were followed by a sighting in Ashland/Bayfield Counties on 25 April (Brady). Four individuals in Burnett County on 29 May (Tessen) was the

high count. Reported from 13 widely scattered counties (the same number as Spring 2006).

**Whimbrel**—Frank reported 2 individuals in Ozaukee County on 14 May. Sontag gave Manitowoc County dates of 17 to 29 May. The Brassers filed an additional report from Sheboygan County on 28 May.

**Hudsonian Godwit**—Polk reported an individual in Eau Claire County on 30 April. Brady gave Bayfield County dates of 14 to 28 May. Frank sighted 2 birds in Dodge County on 20 May.

**Marbled Godwit**—Also recorded in 3 counties, beginning in Bayfield County on 21 April. Polk had 3 individuals in Dunn County on 7 May, and Ziebell recorded it in Winnebago County on 20 May. Brady reported it again in Bayfield County on 25 May.

**Ruddy Turnstone**—An “inland” sighting in Richland County (19 May, Tessen) was a bit unusual; the other sightings encompassed Great Lakes counties and Winnebago County. Hoffmann’s 16 individuals in Kenosha County on 5 May were well ahead of the next sighting, which came on 17 May in Ozaukee County (Frank). Last reported on 30 May by Johnson in Douglas County.

**Red Knot**—Two individuals seen in Kewaunee County on 21 May (Baumanns) constituted the only report.

**Sanderling**—All reports came from 8 counties with Great Lakes or Lake Winnebago frontage. In Winnebago County from 12 May to EOP (Ziebell). Brady tallied 30 individuals in Bayfield County on 25 May.

**Semipalmated Sandpiper**—First seen in Dodge County on 2 May (Tessen). Seen in 20 counties; Brady had an impressive 256 individuals in Bayfield County on 31 May.

**Least Sandpiper**—First arrived in Waukesha County on 1 May (Gustafson), where it remained until 24 May. Ziebell ran up a count of 384 in Winnebago County on 12 May. Appearances in 22 counties closed out with a Tessen 26 May sighting in Ashland County.

**White-rumped Sandpiper**—Sightings in 17 counties spanned the period from 10 May (Grant County, Romano) to 28 May (Fond du Lac County, Frank). Ziebell found 10 individuals in Winnebago County on 25 May.

**Baird’s Sandpiper**—23 April represented a fairly early first arrival, especially in Ashland/Bayfield Counties, where it was seen until EOP (Brady). Ziebell had 6 individuals in Winnebago County on 25 May. Reported from 8 counties.

**Pectoral Sandpiper**—In Ozaukee County from 1 April (the earliest date) to 10 May (Frank). Brady saw 15 in Ashland/Bayfield Counties on 7 May. Departed Winnebago County on 25 May (Ziebell), the latest date given. Seen in 19 counties.

**Dunlin**—Widespread (27 counties) and common, with at least three counts in triple digits. First seen in Ashland/Bayfield Counties, where it persisted until EOP, on 21 April (Brady). The high count was 758, registered in Winnebago County by Ziebell on 20 May.

**Stilt Sandpiper**—Four reports: Dane County on 5 May (Stutz); Dunn County on 7 May and 22 May (Polk); Fond du Lac County on 28 May (Frank). No more than 3 individuals were noted on any of the reports.

**Short-billed Dowitcher**—Reported from 15 mostly southern counties, with better representation in the southwestern corner of the state than many other shorebird species. In Manitowoc County, Sontag had 33 individuals on 15 May as well as the earliest arrival date (7 May). Last reported in Fond du Lac (Frank) and Ashland/Bayfield (Brady) Counties on 28 May.

**Long-billed Dowitcher**—Two 12 May reports, in Iowa (A. Holschbach) and Fond du Lac (Tessen) Counties. Also seen in Door County on 15 May (Lukes) and in Manitowoc County on 23 May (Tessen).

**Wilson’s Snipe**—Early dates included 3 and 18 March in Kenosha (Hoffmann) and Oconto (Smiths) Counties respectively. Kluber-tanz reported 40 in Rock County on 9 April.

**American Woodcock**—First seen by Gustafson in Waukesha County on 12 March. Frank had 11 in Ozaukee County on 18 May.

**Wilson’s Phalarope**—Arrived on 28 April in Dodge County (Tessen) and on 29 April in Dane County (Evanson). Reported from 8 counties, with the initial sighting also providing the seasonal maximum (5).

**Red-necked Phalarope**—Polk found an individual in Dunn County on 8 May, adding 2

more there on 25 May. In addition, Tessen had 1 in Dane County on 20 May.

**Laughing Gull**—At least 2 individuals, an adult and a second-year bird, were seen off and on throughout May in Racine, Ozaukee (See Fig. 7), Sheboygan, and Manitowoc Counties. The first report came on 9 May in Racine County (Dixon), the last on 31 May in Sheboygan County (Gustafson). See "By the Wayside."

**Franklin's Gull**—Leshner's report from La Crosse County on 15 March establishes the second earliest arrival date ever, with the earliest date of 8 March 1992 also having occurred in La Crosse County. This year's bird remained until 28 May. The Baumanns filed a report from Kewaunee County on 21 May, and Brady had one in Bayfield County on 31 May.

**Little Gull**—Most reports came from Manitowoc and Sheboygan Counties, beginning on 11 May in the former (Sontag). Adult birds were seen in both Ozaukee (Cutright) and Douglas (Johnson) Counties on 23 May. Up to 4 individuals were in Sheboygan County at EOP (Frank). [See Fig. 8.]

**Bonaparte's Gull**—First reported from Ozaukee County on 22 March (Tessen). Tessen also reported the largest number, 700 in Columbia County on 19 April. Reported near or at EOP only in Great Lakes counties.

**Thayer's Gull**—Reported from 4 Lake Michigan counties and Douglas and Winnebago Counties. In addition, there was a Dane County report on 11 March (Stutz). Still in Sheboygan County at EOP (Gustafson).

**Iceland Gull**—The first of 4 reports came from Tessen in Manitowoc County on 11 March. Johnson had it in Douglas County on 12 March. Another Manitowoc County report came from Sontag on 6 April. Frank filed the final report on 24 May in Ozaukee County.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull**—Seen in Dane, Ozaukee, Sheboygan, Manitowoc, and Winnebago Counties, between 10 March (Winnebago County, Tessen) and 23 May (Sheboygan County, Tessen).

**Slaty-backed Gull**—The winter individual in Winnebago County was last reported on 11 March (Frank).

**Glaucous Gull**—Reported from 7 counties, all with Great Lakes or Lake Winnebago frontage. Tessen had 12 in Winnebago County

on 14 March. Last reported on 18 May in Ozaukee County (Frank).

**Great Black-backed Gull**—Also strictly lacustrine, with 6 county reports and a maximum concentration of 8 individuals in Manitowoc County on 11 March (Tessen). Stutz also had 3 in Sheboygan County on 19 May.

**Black-legged Kittiwake**—The record late spring date was extended for the second year in a row, as the 10 May Ozaukee County 2006 record was eclipsed by an immature bird seen and photographed by many observers between 28 and 31 May in Sheboygan County. See "By the Wayside."

**Caspian Tern**—Fare encountered an individual in Racine County on 30 March, marking the second earliest arrival on record [behind 26 March 1979 in Winnebago County]. Hoffmann next had it on 6 April in Kenosha County. The Smiths recorded 51 in Oconto County on 22 April. Seen in 18 counties.

**Black Tern**—Hoffmann saw it on 28 April in Kenosha County, with Tessen following up with a 2 May Columbia County report. Stutz reported the largest number, 30 birds in Fond du Lac County on 19 May. Seen in 16 counties statewide.

**Forster's Tern**—The first of 23 county reports occurred on 14 April in Green County (Evanson). Brady reported 40 individuals in Bayfield County on 7 May.

**Common Tern**—The earliest report was Ziebell's 17 April Winnebago County sighting. In Douglas County, Johnson reported 150 on 16 May. Reported from 16 counties.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove**—Reports of up to 2 individuals in Green (17 March, Evanson), Columbia (24 March, Tessen), Crawford (15 April, Stutz), and Grant (28 April, Romano) Counties.

**White-winged Dove**—Spitzer photographed an individual in Kenosha County on 16 May. Thus, recorded for the fourth year in a row, bringing the number of state records up to seven.

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo**—Seen in 10 counties in the southern half of the state as well as in Door and Marinette Counties. The earliest sighting came on 8 May in Lafayette County (Romano). A. Holschbach recorded 4 individuals in Iowa County on 12 May.

**Black-billed Cuckoo**—Seen in 10 counties spread around the state. As above, seen first by Romano in Lafayette County on 8 May.

**Barn Owl**—Stutz described an individual found hunting over a field in Dane County on 3 March. See "By the Wayside."

**Eastern Screech-Owl**—Three of the meager 8 reporting counties were contiguous ones [Fond du Lac, Winnebago, and Calumet Counties]. The others were Ozaukee and 4 southwestern counties.

**Snowy Owl**—Two reports: Ziebell saw one in Winnebago County on 13 March, and Panetti reported on the death of a bird undergoing rehabilitation in Ozaukee County on 18 April.

**Great Gray Owl**—Brady followed up to 5 individuals TTP in Bayfield County.

**Long-eared Owl**—Reports from early March in Manitowoc (J. Holschbach), Iowa and Grant (Romano), and La Crosse (Leshner) Counties, with the Manitowoc individual(s) present until at least 7 April. In addition, Stutz gave a Marquette County date of 19 May.

**Short-eared Owl**—Reporting counties were significantly up, from only 2 in 2006 to 7 this year. The earliest report came from Marathon County (8 March, Belter), the latest from Winnebago County (19 April, Bruce). Two of the reports concerned 2 individuals.

**Northern Saw-whet Owl**—Recorded in Grant, Lafayette, Marquette, Douglas, Ashland/Bayfield, and Door Counties, mostly in March but also on 19 May in Marquette County (Stutz).

**Common Nighthawk**—A bird on 2 April in Dane County (McDowell) was deemed by the WSO Records Committee as seen too briefly to rule out another species of nighthawk, in particular Lesser Nighthawk, which migrates earlier than Common. This could cast the only earlier record of Common Nighthawk [1 April 1995, also in Dane County] under suspicion. Otherwise, unquestioned Common Nighthawk reports began a full month later, with a 2 May sighting by the LaValleys in Douglas County. Johnson saw 16 individuals in that county on 25 May. Reported from 18 counties.

**Whip-poor-will**—Reported from 14 widely scattered counties, with a first report on 30 April coming from A. Holschbach in Iowa

County. Tessen heard 5 in Burnett County on 28 May.

**Chimney Swift**—Arrived in La Crosse County on 21 April (Evanson) and in 6 more counties the next two days. Ziebell counted 80 individuals in Winnebago County on 25 April.

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird**—Not reported until 6 May, when the Lukes found it in Door County. The maximum reported was only 3 (Sauk County, 19 May, Stutz). Found in 26 counties.

**Belted Kingfisher**—Reported at or near BOP in Green (Yoerger), Iowa (A. Holschbach), and St. Croix (Persico) Counties. Stutz reported 8 individuals in Grant County on 15 April.

**Red-headed Woodpecker**—Only one report before May, a 15 April Grant County sighting (Stutz). Tessen counted 4 individuals there on 17 May. Reported from 18 counties from all parts of the state.

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**—Reports on 4 March (Jefferson County, Hale) and 13 March (Kenosha County, Hoffmann) may well have represented overwintering individuals, as the remainder of the calendar was filled in beginning with 6 county reports the last week of March. Stutz had 18 birds in Grant County on 15 April. Last seen in Milwaukee County on 3 May (Gustafson) for a representative southern county departure date.

**Black-backed Woodpecker**—Reported by J. Schaufenbuel in Vilas County on 31 March and by Richmond in Oneida County on 25 May.

**Northern Flicker**—This season's definite overwinterers were found in Iowa, Manitowoc, and Door Counties, with 4 more counties added by the end of the first week of March. That list included Ashland/Bayfield Counties, where Brady reported it on 6 March; he also counted 81 individuals there on 21 April for the seasonal maximum. Gustafson threw in 41 birds in Milwaukee County on 30 March for good measure.

**Olive-sided Flycatcher**—Early reports included 5 May in Sheboygan County (Brassers), 8 May in Calumet County (Tessen), and 9 May in Brown County (Tessen). Reports continued at regular intervals until EOP, with a total of 12 counties throughout the state eventually represented.

**Eastern Wood-Pewee**—Arrived on 30 April in Winnebago County (Bruce), though the next date was not until 7 May (Dane County, Evanson). Stutz saw 5 individuals twice, first in Dane County on 17 May and again in Sauk County on 26 May.

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher**—First seen on 16 May in Milwaukee County (Gustafson). Gustafson also gave the latest report, 29 May in Waukesha County. Seen in 9 mostly southeastern counties.

**Acadian Flycatcher**—Reported from 8 counties, Manitowoc County (14 May, Sontag) the northernmost among them. As expected, the stronghold was in the southwestern part of the state, where the earliest report (Iowa County, 11 May, Stutz) was received. Tessen had 4 individuals in Grant County on 17 May.

**Alder Flycatcher**—A 2 May sighting in Douglas County by the LaValleys was well ahead of the remaining ones, which commenced on 11 May in Iowa County (Stutz). Evanson produced the high count of 8 individuals in Rusk County on 25 May. Reported from 18 counties.

**Willow Flycatcher**—A 28 April arrival in Door County (Lukes) tied for second earliest ever [the record is 27 April 1991, in Monroe County]. Not reported again until 8 May, when it showed up in Winnebago (Knispel) and Marinette (Campbell) Counties. Evanson noted 8 individuals in Green County on 26 May. Seen in 21 counties.

**Least Flycatcher**—First arrival in Iowa County on 1 May (A. Holschbach). The Smiths found 6 in Oconto County on 13 May. Reported from 32 counties.

**Eastern Phoebe**—Zehner noted the first returnee on 13 March in Milwaukee County. There was a sprinkling of sightings the following week, then the pace picked up and by the end of the month it had made its appearance in over half of the 35 counties from which it was eventually reported. Stutz counted 30 in Grant County on 15 April.

**Great Crested Flycatcher**—1 May reports from Iowa (A. Holschbach) and Milwaukee (Tessen) Counties. Reported from 29 counties, with a total of 5 individuals reported 3 times, from Dane, Iowa, and Oconto Counties.

**Eastern Kingbird**—Two arrivals a week ahead of the rest: on 22 April in Rock County (Klubertanz) and the next day in Door County

(Lukes). Ziebell counted 30 individuals in Winnebago County on 12 May. Reported from 34 counties.

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**—Reported twice this season, with a 3 May individual in Bayfield County (Vietmeier) followed by a 28 May report from St. Croix County (Persico). See "By the Wayside,"

**Loggerhead Shrike**—Early reports from Dane (29 March, Thiessen) and Manitowoc (1 April, J. Holschbach) Counties. Then nothing until 4 May, when Oksiota found one in Bayfield County. Brady then followed with a pair, possibly nesting, in Ashland County from 19 May until EOP.

**Northern Shrike**—Persisted in 13 widely scattered counties from the winter season, with a high count of 8 produced in Ashland/Bayfield Counties on 31 March (Brady). Brady also noted the final departure there, on 15 April.

**White-eyed Vireo**—Reports this season from 5 southern counties, covering the period 1 May (Milwaukee County, Tessen) to 27 May (Dane County, Evanson). Two individuals were seen in Iowa County on 5 May (A. Holschbach) and in Milwaukee County on 13 May (Lubahn). Also seen in Rock and Racine Counties.

**Bell's Vireo**—An excellent spring for this species, with the highest number of reporting counties [9] so far this century. The extent of the range was also remarkable, with reports from Winnebago, Wood, Dunn, and especially Douglas Counties included. First noted on 12 May in Dane (Stutz, Tessen) and Dodge (Tessen) Counties. The Douglas County report came on 31 May (Johnson).

**Yellow-throated Vireo**—First seen by Tessen in Green Lake County on 28 April. Stutz reported 6 in Iowa County on 12 May. Recorded in 26 counties.

**Blue-headed Vireo**—The number of reporting counties for this species has been slowly declining, from the high in the low 20s, over the last 10 years or so. This season, it was only reported in 15 counties and, unusually for such a relatively early migrant, not at all in April. Tessen first had it in Milwaukee County on 1 May. Evanson recorded a high of only 3 in Dane County on 7 May.

**Warbling Vireo**—In contrast to the previous species, appears to be doing well, with 33 reporting counties matching the number for the

supposedly most common vireo, the Red-eyed. Appeared on 28 April in Grant County (Romano). Evanson reported 8 individuals in Dane County on 27 May.

**Philadelphia Vireo**—The first of 11 county reports was filed on 1 May by A. Holschbach in Iowa County. The majority (7) of the county reports came in the second half of the month, with a maximum of 4 individuals reported by Gustafson on 22 May in Racine County.

**Red-eyed Vireo**—A week's gap separated the first sighting (29 April, Door County, Lukes) from all the others. Evanson reported the seasonal high of 26 in Rusk County on 25 May.

**Gray Jay**—Found in 8 northern tier counties; though surely present in all or most of them every year, this is still a very high number of counties actually reporting it in a given season. Brady found 3 of them in Bayfield County on 20 May, with Richmond adding 6 in Forest County on 25 May.

**Blue Jay**—Frank noted flocks of about 35 and 40 moving through Milwaukee and Ozaukee Counties on 2 May and 18 May respectively.

**Common Raven**—Found south of its expected range in Sauk County on 18 May (Tessen). Otherwise, Jackson and Winnebago Counties were the southernmost of the remaining 15 reporting counties.

**Purple Martin**—The first WSO reports hailed from 3 counties on 20 April, which would have made this the second tardiest arrival on record, outdone only by a 25 April 1997 arrival date. This aroused enough curiosity to dip into the eBird database, where only one earlier date was found: 5 April (Grant County, A. Holschbach). Thus, but for this one "outlier," it was indeed a late arrival year. The maximum number reported was 65, on 11 May in Winnebago County (Ziebell). Reported in 24 counties.

**Tree Swallow**—Stutz saw the first re-turnees on 10 March in Iowa and Sauk Counties. Tessen estimated 3,000 individuals in Winnebago County on 5 April. Seen in 39 counties.

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow**—O'Connor reported the earliest, 9 April in Milwaukee County. A. Holschbach reported 58 individuals in Sauk County on 16 April. Found in 33 counties.

**Bank Swallow**—Found in 20 counties, the smallest number for any of the swallows. First seen on 21 April in Iowa County (A. Holschbach). Hoffmann had over 50 in Kenosha County on 28 April.

**Cliff Swallow**—Arrived on 19 April in Winnebago County (Ziebell). The Smiths counted 150 birds in Oconto County on 10 May. Found in 25 counties.

**Barn Swallow**—March arrival dates are becoming more common; this year, Gustafson had it on 23 March, in Waukesha County. The next earliest date however was not until 13 April (Rock County, Yoerger). Ziebell tallied 430 in Winnebago County on 20 May. Noted as present in 33 counties.

**Boreal Chickadee**—Kavanagh reported 6 individuals in Florence County on 10 April, with Richmond adding a Forest County sighting on 25 May.

**Tufted Titmouse**—Significant northern county sightings were to be had in Ashland County (1 to 5 March, Brady) and in Door County, where the Lukes reported it TTP. Stutz found 35 in Grant County on 15 April. Found in 15 counties overall.

**Red-breasted Nuthatch**—Widespread, with reports from 28 counties evenly scattered throughout the season.

**Brown Creeper**—Found in 26 counties, 8 or so at or near BOP. Stutz had 30 in Grant County on 15 April. The Brassers had it as late as 5 May in Sheboygan County.

**Rock Wren**—Hands down the event of the season, with a much-visited and much-photographed bird discovered in Milwaukee County by Lubahn on 30 April and remaining until at least 2 May going into the books as the very first state record. Prestby produced an amusing photograph (Fig. 9) of it sticking its bill into a knothole. See "By the Wayside."

**Carolina Wren**—Found in 9 counties, with Door County at a considerable distance from all the other, southern ones. The Door County individual in fact had overwintered, lingering at a feeder until at least 3 March (Lukes). The high count was 4, achieved in Grant County on 13 April (Romano).

**House Wren**—As often, a highly concentrated first arrival pattern, with records in at least 10 counties between 20 and 25 April, the

earliest being on 20 April in Kenosha County (Hoffmann). Stutz had 15 individuals in Dane County on 5 May.

**Winter Wren**—Six reports near the end of March, beginning with an individual in Winnebago County on 25 March (Ziebell). Tessen encountered it in that county as late as 7 May. Frank reported 6 individuals in Ozaukee County on 12 April.

**Sedge Wren**—Reports on 24 April in Waukesha (Gustafson) and on 28 April in Green Lake (Tessen) Counties. Ziebell counted around 100 of them in Winnebago County on 12 May.

**Marsh Wren**—The Lukes reported it in Door County on 20 April. Tessen saw up to 10 in Green Lake County by 28 April, with Ziebell counting 174 in Winnebago County on 12 May.

**Golden-crowned Kinglet**—BOP only in Winnebago County, where it was last seen on 26 April (Ziebell). Migrant reports were plentiful in late March, beginning on 22 March in Racine County (Gustafson). EOP in Douglas County (Johnson), with the latest report from more southern counties coming on 5 May in Dane County (Stutz). The high count was 52, achieved by Frank in Milwaukee County on 5 April.

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet**—Four March reports, commencing with sightings on 26 March in Winnebago (Tessen) and Door (Lukes) Counties. Frank reported 64 individuals in Ozaukee County on 22 April. Late southern county departures included a 22 May Sauk County report (A. Holschbach). At EOP in Ashland/Bayfield Counties (Brady).

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**—First seen in Kenosha County on 20 April by Hoffmann. Appeared in Dane County two days later, with a total of 30 reported there on 5 May (Stutz). The more northern parts of the state were represented in the 25-county distribution by Oconto, Door, and Marinette Counties.

**Eastern Bluebird**—Iowa County (A. Holschbach) produced the only BOP report, though it was seen in Dane County as early as 4 March (Stutz). The main body of arrivals appeared to start around 10 March. Tessen noted 45 northward bound birds moving through Ozaukee County on 22 March.

**Veery**—First report came on 5 May in Dane County (Stutz). He also produced the high

count of 8, in Sauk County on 26 May. Recorded in 25 counties.

**Gray-cheeked Thrush**—Arrived on 6 May in Outagamie County (Tessen), with 5 more county reports in the next two days. Appeared in 13 mostly eastern counties, with only Brady in Ashland/Bayfield Counties reporting an individual number (2 on 20 May).

**Swainson's Thrush**—Arrived on 1 May in Milwaukee County (Gustafson). Evanson counted 4 individuals in Dane County on 16 May. Appeared in 24 counties.

**Hermit Thrush**—26 March arrival dates in Winnebago (Tessen) and Door (Lukes) Counties. J. Holschbach recorded it in Manitowoc County as late as 10 May. Appeared in 22 counties, with a maximum of 12 individuals present in Ozaukee County on 22 April (Frank).

**Wood Thrush**—The only April report came from Hoffmann in Kenosha County on 28 April. Stutz next had it on 1 May in Dane County, where he also recorded the maximum number (8) on 5 May. Appeared in 26 counties.

**American Robin**—At BOP in about 8 counties. A spectacular Dane County stream of birds "in the tens of thousands" returning to a roost was described by Yost on 4 March.

**Varied Thrush**—No fewer than 5 counties registered reports, all of them northern, and most of them as usual referring to overwintering individuals lingering at feeders. Birds were noted in Marathon, Door, Marinette, Florence, and Bayfield Counties, from 3 March (Marinette County, Kavanagh) to 13 April (Bayfield County, Brady).

**Gray Catbird**—Reports before 1 May in Kenosha (28 April, Hoffmann) and Dane (29 April, Evanson) Counties. Stutz reported 12 individuals in Iowa County on 12 May.

**Northern Mockingbird**—Interestingly, all 5 county reports (Rock, Iowa, Fond du Lac, Monroe, and Bayfield Counties) came in May. E. Wood wrote about 2 individuals "singing to the point of annoyance" in Monroe County on 28 May.

**Brown Thrasher**—Arrived for the most part in mid-April, with 2 significantly earlier reports: on 27 March in Racine (Gustafson) and on 3 April in Columbia (Dischler) Counties. Evanson reported the largest number, 7 in Green County on 14 April.





Figure 7. Laughing Gull in Port Washington harbor, Ozaukee County, on 23 May 2007 was photographed by Seth Cutright.



Figure 8. Little Gull at Sheboygan shoreline in May 2007 was captured in flight by Scott Franke.



Figure 9. Tom Prestby caught the Milwaukee County Rock Wren checking out this knot hole on 30 April 2007.

**American Pipit**—First noted on 27 March in Racine (Gustafson) and Oconto (Smiths) Counties; the latter sighting already consisted of 12 individuals, although Brady later [9 May] counted 25 individuals in Ashland/Bayfield Counties. Noted in 7 counties, the latest report being filed from Waukesha County (Gustafson) on 14 May.

**Bohemian Waxwing**—Flocks of 50 (10 April, Douglas County, Johnson) and 110 (14 April, Ashland/Bayfield Counties, Brady) were noted.

**Blue-winged Warbler**—Seen on 27 April in Dane (Evanson) and on 30 April in Grant (Romano) Counties. Stutz had 20 in Iowa County on 11 May. Seen in 16 counties, as far north as St. Croix and Oconto Counties.

**Golden-winged Warbler**—Evanson saw it in Dane County on 30 April. Tessen had the maximum of 3, in Brown County on 9 May. Seen in 22 counties throughout the state.

**Blue-winged × Golden-winged Warbler**—Frank filed the only report, finding a “Brewster’s” type in Milwaukee County on 10 May.

**Tennessee Warbler**—First appeared in Dane County on 27 April (Stutz). Evanson saw 16 there on 16 May for the high count. Tessen found one still in Outagamie County on 31 May. Appeared in 27 counties.

**Orange-crowned Warbler**—The first of the 15 county reports dates from 22 April, a bird found by Frank in Ozaukee County. He counted 3 individuals in Milwaukee County on 2 May. Last reported on 22 May, with birds in

Racine (Gustafson) and Manitowoc (Sontag) Counties.

**Nashville Warbler**—Stutz found both the earliest (22 April) and the most (30 on 5 May) in Dane County. Appeared in 29 counties.

**Northern Parula**—The earliest report came from Stutz on 27 April in Dane County, where it remained until 17 May. Tessen’s 3 individuals in Brown County on 9 May constituted the high count. Found in 19 counties.

**Yellow Warbler**—First seen in Iowa County on 22 April (A. Holschbach). Five other counties had been checked off by the end of the month. The high count was the 80 birds Stutz found in Iowa County on 12 May.

**Chestnut-sided Warbler**—Not reported until 6 May, when it appeared in Iowa County (Stutz). Tessen had 5 individuals in Brown County on 9 May. Seen in 28 counties.

**Magnolia Warbler**—Appeared on 5 May in Dane County (Stutz). After a St. Croix County report the next day (Persico), it turned up in 5 more counties on 7 May. Frank counted 9 in Milwaukee County on 10 May. Turned up on 24 county reports in all.

**Cape May Warbler**—Seen first in Milwaukee County (3 May, Gustafson). Most of the 18 county reports came from the first half of the month, with 25 May reports from Evanson in Jackson and Rusk Counties among the latest. Frank’s 10 individuals in Milwaukee County on 8 May took high honors.

**Black-throated Blue Warbler**—Ten mostly eastern county reports, beginning with a sighting on 5 May in Dane County (Stutz). Frank had 3 individuals in Milwaukee County on 10 May.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler**—The Shilling-laws last observed an overwintering bird at an Outagamie County feeder on 10 March. Appeared in Iowa, Rock, and Dane Counties on 31 March. Stutz noted about 200 individuals in Dane County on 5 May. Bruce’s 20 May Winnebago County report was the latest given.

**“Audubon’s” Yellow-rumped Warbler**—Reported for the fourth spring in a row, with a bird found by Lubahn on 23 April in Milwaukee County.

**Black-throated Green Warbler**—First seen on 22 April in Ozaukee County (Frank),

with further sightings in Waukesha and Columbia Counties near month's end. Stutz reported no fewer than 40 individuals in Dane County on 5 May. Seen in 26 counties.

**Blackburnian Warbler**—Appeared first on the relatively late date of 5 May, with sightings in Brown (Tessen) and Ashland/Bayfield (Brady) Counties. At least 7 counties gave 8 May arrival dates. Stutz noted 2 individuals in Sauk County on 26 May for the only multiple sighting. Reported from 22 counties.

**Yellow-throated Warbler**—Lubahn's initial sighting of an individual in Milwaukee County on 24 April was followed by one on 28 April in a more traditional locale, Grant County (Romano). Kaiser photographed an individual at a bird bath in Eau Claire County on 23 May.

**Pine Warbler**—See Introduction and "By the Wayside." Fare started off the parade of the 4 new earliest arrivals ever in Racine County on 27 March. The next day there were reports from Lohre in Dane County and from Ruhser in La Crosse County. Gustafson added the final individual in Waukesha County on 29 March. For sure, "Something was happening here, what it was ain't exactly clear!" The first "normal" sightings then came on 21 April in Sheboygan (Brassers) and St. Croix (Persico) Counties. The Smiths topped out at 5 individuals in Oconto County on 29 April. Seen in 18 counties overall.

**Prairie Warbler**—The season's sole report came from Hoffman in Sauk County on 23 May.

**Palm Warbler**—Twenty-eight county sightings, the earliest coming from St. Croix County on 21 April (Persico). Frank found 40 in Milwaukee County on 10 May. The latest date away from the northern tier counties was 19 May, in Iowa (Romano) and in Wood (Stutz) Counties. Richmond had the last report, 25 May in Forest County.

**Bay-breasted Warbler**—Three 7 May first arrival dates, in Dane, Winnebago, and Calumet Counties (Evanson, Ziebell, and Tessen respectively). Three more counties followed the next day, making it appear the birds might have been backed up by the weather. Frank had 4 individuals in Milwaukee County on 10 May for the high count. Seen in 16 mostly eastern counties.

**Blackpoll Warbler**—Like the previous species, multiple 7 or 8 May arrivals, but preceded in this species by a single sighting on 5 May in Brown County (Tessen). No observer in-

dicated that individuals had been counted. Seen in 21 counties.

**Cerulean Warbler**—Seen in a cluster of 7 southwestern counties only. Arrived on 7 May in Grant (Leshner) and Dane (Yoerger) Counties. Tessen counted 6 in Grant County on 17 May.

**Black-and-white Warbler**—Hoffmann saw 2 individuals in Kenosha County on 28 April. Five counties had 1 May arrival dates. The high count was 5, on 5 May in Dane County (Stutz). Seen in 23 counties.

**American Redstart**—Just ahead of the pack was a 6 May individual seen by Stutz in Sauk County. Two counties were added the next day and then on 8 May it appeared in at least 8 more. By 12 May Stutz was seeing as many as 40 birds, this time in Iowa County. Reported from 29 counties.

**Prothonotary Warbler**—Reported only from 5 southern counties. Hoffman had one in Kenosha County on 28 April, Romano one in Grant County from 4 to 22 May, Yoerger one in Rock County from 5 to 12 May, Stutz one in Sauk County from 6 to 12 May, and A. Holschbach one in Iowa County from 8 to 20 May.

**Worm-eating Warbler**—The season's 2 reports came from the Baumanns in Brown County (4 May) and, more expectedly, from Tessen in Sauk County (18 May).

**Ovenbird**—The earliest arrival date was 23 April in Dane County (Yoerger). Hoffmann had 4 in Kenosha County on 28 April. Recorded in 33 counties.

**Northern Waterthrush**—Appeared on 24 April in Waukesha County (Gustafson). A. Holschbach noted 11 individuals in Iowa County on 5 May. Reported from 23 counties.

**Louisiana Waterthrush**—A first arrival from among all the paper reports of only 2 May (Sauk County, Tessen) would have been unusually late, so an eBird check revealed dates of 21 April (Sauk County, Peterson) and 22 April (Racine County, Fare). Found in 10 counties as far north as Juneau and Manitowoc Counties.

**Kentucky Warbler**—Reports were received from Marquette County on 9 May (Shillinglaw), from Grant (Tessen) and Milwaukee (David) Counties on 17 May, and from Sauk County on 26 May (Stutz). The Grant County sighting referred to 4 individuals.

**Connecticut Warbler**—Appeared on 16 and 17 May in Waukesha (Gustafson) and Winnebago (Ziebell) Counties respectively. Also seen in migration in Dane, Racine, Ozaukee, Winnebago, and Outagamie Counties, as well as in Ashland/Bayfield and Douglas Counties later in the month.

**Mourning Warbler**—Tessen had 2 individuals in Brown County on 9 May for the earliest report. The rest came between 15 May and EOP. Reported from 21 counties, with the Smiths seeing 3 in Oconto County on 23 May for the maximum.

**Common Yellowthroat**—First noted on 24 April in Racine County (Gustafson). Evanson counted 15 individuals in Green County on 26 May. Reported from 33 counties.

**Hooded Warbler**—Juneau and Manitowoc Counties formed the northwestern border of the 9 reporting counties. Reported first on 28 April in Kenosha County (Hoffmann) and then on 5 May by Stutz in Dane County. The same observer also had 5 individuals in Sauk County on 26 May, the same number Klubertanz gave for his Rock County report of 30 May.

**Wilson's Warbler**—Seen in 21 counties, beginning with a sighting on 1 May by A. Holschbach in Sauk County. Brady saw 4 in Ashland/Bayfield Counties on 20 May.

**Canada Warbler**—Seen first on 8 May in Iowa (A. Holschbach) and Door (Lukes) Counties. Stutz reported 3 individuals in Dane County on 16 May. Recorded in 19 counties statewide.

**Yellow-breasted Chat**—Frank filed a report in Milwaukee County on 2 May. A Dane County report followed on 16 May (Tessen), with Stutz noting 2 birds there on 26 May.

**Summer Tanager**—There were 5 reports in 4 counties this spring. First was a female at a feeder in Oconto County on 28 April (Smiths). On 8 May an immature male was seen in Door County (Lukes). Two days later another immature male turned up at a Sheboygan County feeder (TenPas). On 14 May the Lukes had their second bird of the season, a female at a feeder. Finally, Hansen saw an adult male in Dane County on 16 May.

**Scarlet Tanager**—Showed up on 5 May in Iowa (A. Holschbach) and Dane (Stutz) Counties. Stutz had 12 individuals in Iowa County on 11 May. Seen in 26 counties.

**Western Tanager**—An adult male discovered in Clark County by Farris on 26 April broke the early arrival record of 27 April, set in 1994 in Waukesha County. The bird remained until at least 2 May. Another adult male showed up in Portage County on 14 May (T. Schaufenbuel). See "By the Wayside."

**Eastern Towhee**—The Lukes reported it at BOP in Door County. Two later March reports were received, on 24 March in Sheboygan County (Brassers) and on 27 March in Racine County (Gustafson). Stutz reported 12 individuals in Iowa County on 12 May.

**American Tree Sparrow**—The Smiths reported a high of 76 individuals early in the season (5 March) in Oconto County. Persisted there until 22 April. The only May dates were a somewhat surprising 1 May in Milwaukee County (Tessen) and a less surprising 20 May in Door County (Lukes).

**Chipping Sparrow**—A bird discovered in Milwaukee County on 4 March by Hagner further blurs the distinction made heretofore in the records between the latest wintering individual [3 March 1990] and the earliest arrival [7 March 1966]. In contrast, 4 county arrivals during the last 3 days of March seemed more normal, with Tessen's 29 March individual in Sauk County the first of the clearly migrant birds. The Smiths counted the greatest number of individuals, 36 in Oconto County on 6 May.

**Clay-colored Sparrow**—First noted in St. Croix County on 22 March (Persico). Stutz counted 35 individuals in Portage County on 19 May. Found in 26 counties scattered about the state.

**Field Sparrow**—A 6 March Columbia County report (Schwalbes) stood alone until other reports started coming in from 27 March (Racine County, Gustafson) on. Twenty birds were counted on May 11 in Iowa County (Stutz).

**Vesper Sparrow**—Arrived on 29 March in Sauk (Tessen) and Waukesha (Gustafson) Counties. Four counties had 1 April arrival dates. High count was Romano's 6 individuals in Iowa County on 24 April. Found in 20 counties.

**Lark Sparrow**—Reported this spring only in Iowa, Sauk, and Dane Counties, with an arrival date of 23 April in all 3 (A. Holschbach in Iowa and Sauk Counties and Stutz in Dane

County). Stutz counted 5 individuals in Sauk County on 12 May.

**Savannah Sparrow**—Hoffmann had the only March report, on 22 March in Kenosha County. Next seen in Dane County on 1 April (Evanson). Ziebell counted an impressive 204 in Winnebago County on 12 May.

**Grasshopper Sparrow**—Tessen filed the earliest report, on 2 May in Sauk County. Stutz had 5 there on 12 May. Seen in 11 counties, the northernmost being St. Croix, Portage and Door Counties.

**Henslow's Sparrow**—28 April reports were received from Grant (Romano) and Green Lake (Tessen) Counties. Stutz had 5 in Portage County on 19 May. Seen in 14 counties, with the same 3 counties the northern limit as for Grasshopper Sparrow.

**Le Conte's Sparrow**—Seen in 4 far northern counties and in Marquette County, where Stutz had it on 19 May, one day after the season's first in Ashland/Bayfield Counties (Brady). Gustafson noted 7 individuals in Oneida County on 28 May.

**Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow**—Seen on 22 May in Milwaukee County (Lubahn) and on 29 May in Burnett County (Tessen).

**Fox Sparrow**—J. Holschbach noted it at BOP in Manitowoc County; 4 March and 7 March "arrivals" in Dane (Stutz) and Rock (Yoerger) Counties seemed far enough ahead of the remaining ones to cast suspicion on their being migrants. After 12 March and 17 March dates in 2 more counties, a slew of reports from 20 March on indicated that migration was in full swing. The most birds reported were 12, in Winnebago County on 26 March (Tessen). No birds lingered into May; in fact, the latest departure given, 27 April in Douglas County (Johnson), ties the record for earliest spring departure date. Reported in 25 counties.

**Song Sparrow**—Already present at BOP in Racine (Gustafson) and Jefferson (Hale) Counties, with at least 7 more counties added by the end of the first week of March. Ziebell counted an impressive number, 474 individuals, in Winnebago County on 12 May.

**Lincoln's Sparrow**—First reported on 21 April in St. Croix County (Persico). Johnson noted it from 25 April until EOP in Douglas County. Reports were filed from 21 counties.

**Swamp Sparrow**—At BOP only in Oconto County (Smiths), with returning migrants noted first on 22 March in Kenosha (Hoffmann) and Racine (Gustafson) Counties. Ziebell's 12 May census in Winnebago County produced 166 individuals.

**White-throated Sparrow**—Likely overwintering birds were noted in Door (Lukes) and Dane (Evanson) Counties on 1 and 2 March respectively. There were 3 more reports by the end of March; the "typical" arrival date seemed to be somewhere in mid-April. Stutz noted 60 in Dane County on 28 April. Away from the breeding range in the state, it was last noted on 18 May in Manitowoc County (J. Holschbach).

**Harris's Sparrow**—During its early May migration, seen only in the four northwestern counties of St. Croix, Washburn, Douglas, and Bayfield, between 7 and 13 May. Before that, Fare had had an individual in Racine County on 26 March.

**White-crowned Sparrow**—The Lukes recorded it in Door County between 5 April and 25 May, these dates comprising both the earliest and latest ones reported. Knispel noted it in Winnebago County between 22 April and 12 May. Frank counted 128 individuals in Ozaukee County on 9 May. Seen in 26 counties.

**Dark-eyed Junco**—High count comprised 200 individuals in Grant County on 15 April (Stutz). Hoffmann had also counted 160 in Kenosha County on 22 March. Departed Milwaukee County on 1 May (Tessen) and Winnebago County on 12 May (Ziebell).

**Lapland Longspur**—Reported from 15 counties statewide, with a late individual still present in Ashland/Bayfield Counties on 24 May (Brady). Five flock counts were received, ranging from 15 to 80 (4 March, Dodge County, Tessen) birds.

**Snow Bunting**—Reported from 12 counties, quite similar in distribution to that of the previous species. J. Holschbach had by far the largest flock, comprising 500 individuals, in Manitowoc County on 18 March. Lingered into April in Door (7 April, Lukes) and Ashland/Bayfield (28 April, Brady) Counties.

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak**—Two birds in Kenosha County on 28 April (Hoffmann) were the earliest arrivals. Three more counties registered 1 May dates. Stutz saw a maximum of 35 in Dane County on 5 May.

**Indigo Bunting**—First reported on 1 May in La Crosse County (Leshner). Stutz saw 12 in Iowa County on 12 May.

**Painted Bunting**—T. Wood discovered an adult male in Milwaukee County on 10 May. See "By the Wayside."

**Dickcissel**—Widespread before EOP for the second consecutive spring, with reports from 8 counties as far north as Rusk and Winnebago Counties. First noted on 10 May in Grant County (Romano). The maximum was 13 individuals in Green County on 26 May (Evanston).

**Bobolink**—First seen on 2 May in Waukesha County (Gustafson). Three reports followed during the next five days; then it was reported in at least 7 more counties on 8 May. Stutz reported 10 individuals twice, first in Iowa County on 12 May and then in Portage County on 19 May. Seen in 27 counties.

**Red-winged Blackbird**—Surprisingly, only one BOP report, in Waukesha County (Gustafson). The next report was on 6 March in Washington County (Frank). Evanston counted 780 in Dane County on 14 March and Stutz added 300 more in Grant County on 15 April.

**Eastern Meadowlark**—At least 9 county first arrivals on 12 or 13 March, preceded only by a 10 March sighting in Manitowoc County (J. Holschbach). Stutz encountered 20 individuals in Grant County on 15 April for the maximum number.

**Western Meadowlark**—The first of 12 county reports came from Romano in Grant County on 23 March. A maximum of only 2 individuals was reported twice, in Portage County on 19 May (Stutz) and in Green County on 26 May (Evanston).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird**—First reported in Kenosha County on 15 April by Hoffmann, with the next report on 19 April by the Smiths in Oconto County. The only count of individuals received totaled 5 birds in Fond du Lac County on 19 May (Stutz). Recorded in 13 counties.

**Rusty Blackbird**—Reported on 4 March in Green County (Yoerger). The remaining first arrivals started coming in on 10 March. By 14 March Tessen was able to report 100 individuals in Dodge County, but no subsequent counts exceeded 50 birds. Last reported on 23 April by

the Brassers in Sheboygan County. Present in 20 counties.

**Brewer's Blackbird**—First noted in Lafayette County on 7 March by Romano. Eight individuals were reported twice, first in Oconto County on 7 May (Smiths) and then in Portage County on 19 May (Stutz). Found in 20 counties.

**Common Grackle**—Unusually, there were no BOP reports, with Rock, Waukesha, and Milwaukee Counties featuring the first returnees as late as 9 March (Yoerger, Gustafson, and Zehner respectively). Stutz gave a figure of 150 in Grant County on 15 April.

**Great-tailed Grackle**—Wisconsin's first individual, a holdover from the winter season in Dodge County, was last reported on 19 April (Michael). Then on 3 May Romano found another one in Grant County, raising at least the suggestion that it could have been the same bird slowly working its way back southwest. See "By the Wayside."

**Brown-headed Cowbird**—At BOP in Oconto County (Smiths) and on 4 March in Rock County (Yoerger). Otherwise, started coming in with regularity around the middle of March. Dane County hosted 200 individuals on 28 April (Stutz).

**Orchard Oriole**—Found in 17 counties, including St. Croix, Burnett, Oconto, and Marinette Counties to the north. Reports ranged from 1 May (Jefferson County, Hale) to 28 May (Burnett County, Tessen). Stutz reported 6 individuals in Iowa County on 11 May.

**Baltimore Oriole**—Two April reports: 28 April in Kenosha County (Hoffmann) and 30 April in Grant County (Romano). Stutz reported 20 individuals in Iowa County on 12 May.

**Pine Grosbeak**—Sightings came from Douglas, Ashland/Bayfield, Forest, Florence, and Door Counties, the final one coming on 29 March in Door County (Lukes). Brady reported 32 individuals in Ashland/Bayfield Counties on 7 March.

**Purple Finch**—Seasonal presence noted in 18 counties throughout the state. The Smiths reported 4 of them in Oconto County on 28 April for the high count.

**Red Crossbill**—Reports from Kavanagh in Forest (10 March) and Florence (6 individuals,

21 March) Counties. In addition, Gustafson had it in Oneida County on 20 April and Brady saw 5 individuals in Ashland/Bayfield Counties on 19 May.

**White-winged Crossbill**—Kavanagh noted it in Vilas, Forest, Florence, and Marinette Counties throughout the season. Also TTP in Ashland/Bayfield Counties, with Brady encountering 30 individuals on 12 March. Gustafson found it in Oneida County on 20 April and again on 26 May.

**Common Redpoll**—Brady reported 251 individuals in Bayfield County on 24 March; it remained in the Ashland/Bayfield Counties area until at least 7 April. Additionally, Johnson reported it in Douglas County on 12 March.

**Pine Siskin**—Seen this season as far south only as Eau Claire (14 April, Polk) and Oconto (6 April, Smiths) Counties. Eight more counties were represented, with Brady counting 55 individuals in Ashland/Bayfield Counties on 29 April and the LaValleys adding 49 in Douglas County on 31 May.

**Evening Grosbeak**—Reported from 6 northern tier counties, with only Kavanagh presenting a count of individuals, 26 in Florence County on 21 March.

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## “By the Wayside”—Spring 2007

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*Documentation for interesting species or forms includes Eurasian Wigeon, Blue-winged × Cinnamon Teal, Little Blue Heron, Glossy Ibis, Black Vulture, Black Rail, Laughing Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake, Barn Owl, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Rock Wren, Pine Warbler, Western Tanager, Painted Bunting and Great-tailed Grackle.*

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### EURASIAN WIGEON (*Anas penelope*)

**6 April 2007, Shiocton, Outagamie County**—The first thing I noted (through the scope) was a reddish head on a duck swimming with some wigeons. At first I thought it was a Redhead, as there were some swimming in the vicinity. I quickly realized it was a male Eurasian Wigeon when I saw the cream colored forehead, reddish breast (less red than the head) and gray back and sides. The head was uniform in color except for the forehead and there was no dark eye patch. The bill was blue-gray. There was a black tail with a white patch just anterior. I also noted that when a male Redhead swam next to it, the Redhead's head color was more intensely red. I also was able to compare it with male American Wigeons that were swimming near it. At times, it made a threat display towards them.—*John Shillinglaw, Appleton, WI. [See Fig. 1]*

### BLUE-WINGED × CINNAMON TEAL (*Anas discors* × *Anas cyanoptera*)

**6 April 2007, Bakkens Pond, Sauk County**—The duck was the same size and shape as the Blue-winged Teal, but stood out due to the bright rusty plumage. Until I got my scope on the bird I thought it was a pure Cinnamon Teal, but with a better look I found features of both species. The plumage was not as bright cinnamon, but the eye was as bright red, as in a Cinnamon Teal. The head was bright cinnamon but showed a trace of a white crescent by the bill as in a Blue-winged Teal. The duck also had a white patch on the side in front of the tail like a Blue-winged Teal and some speckling on the sides. I was able to get some photos (Fig. 2) of this duck which show these features.—*Aaron Holschbach, Arena, WI.*





Figure 1. Eurasian Wigeon at Shiocton was photographed by Pat Ready on 7 April 2007.



Figure 2. A Blue-winged Teal  $\times$  Cinnamon Teal hybrid was found in Sauk County by Aaron Holschbach on 6 April 2007.



Figure 3. Glossy Ibis coming in to land at Horicon Marsh NWR was photographed by Dave Freriks on 19 May 2007 along Hwy 49.



Figure 4. Some of the 8–9 Glossy Ibis seen by Dave Freriks at Horicon Marsh NWR on 19 May 2007.

### LITTLE BLUE HERON

(*Egretta caerulea*)

**27 April 2007, Tichigan Lake, Racine County**—While riding a bicycle with my daughter, I noticed a heron 100 or 150 yards off the road. It flew up and landed on the other side of the water approximately 20 yards away. As soon as it took off the color was all wrong for a Great Blue Heron. It was all dark blue, not gray. The size was also smaller. Immediately I thought Green Heron. But this bird was larger and longer-necked than Green Heron. It appeared to be either a Little Blue or a Tricolored Heron. When it landed, I noted the insides of the wings were all dark blue. The breast and belly appeared uniformly dark. I did not see any white. We got home about half an hour later, picked up a scope and binoculars and went back out, but we were unable to relocate the bird. I also went out the next morning to look in all the best places for it, but unfortunately I never saw it again.—*Patrick Horn, Muskego, WI.*

### GLOSSY IBIS

(*Plegadis falcinellus*)

**19 May 2007, Horicon Marsh, Fond du Lac County**—Birds flew in low from the northeast. I immediately recognized them as ibises from their shape and long decurved bill. They flew with their heads extended and legs trailing behind. They flew in loosely in groups of 2 or 3 for a total of 8 or 9 birds. They foraged in the shallow water in an area of vegetation growth with their heads down and long bills underwater in a probing motion. They would feed in an area and then occa-

sionally birds would get up and fly a short distance to the front of the group. The birds were in breeding plumage, generally a dark orange/red (rust) color on the body/head and a medium/dark gray on the wings (Figures 3 and 4). The bill was grayish colored, long, stout and decurved. I observed a dark facial pattern with a bluish white border between the eye and bill. When the birds left they flew south over Highway 49 and thus into Dodge County. I suspected Glossy Ibis from my memory of the species but I did not have a field guide with me and I confirmed the identity when I got home from memory and photographs I took of the birds.—*Dave Freriks, Cedarburg, WI.*

### BLACK VULTURE

(*Coragyps atratus*)

**28 April 2007, Fisher Creek Wildlife Area, Manitowoc County**—Our group had been observing a number of small flocks of Turkey Vultures moving through the area as we drove along Lake Michigan from Cleveland. As we pulled into the parking lot and got out of our vehicles, Jim Johnson called out that a very dark bird flying with two Turkey Vultures looked like a Black Vulture. The three vultures were close together, easily observed in the same optic field for a good comparison. The Black Vulture was smaller; specifically, the tail was shorter, the wings noticeably shorter and wider, the plumage overall a darker black, with a dark head showing no red color. The three birds were rising above the tree tops, providing excellent observation of their extended wings. The Black Vulture displayed

large white conspicuous patches that extended from the base of the primaries to the distal point of the extended wings. The remainder of the wings appeared to be uniformly dark in coloration. The two Turkey Vultures displayed an obvious differentiation or contrast between black wing linings and silver gray flight feathers. The Black Vulture in flight flapped more, with a shorter choppy beat, than the Turkey Vultures, as all three climbed in altitude. After gaining sufficient height, the two Turkey Vultures assumed their typical dihedral wing position and rocking motion. The Black Vulture had to flap longer to stay with them and then flattened out its wings to glide and circle in ever larger spirals, drifting to the north. The three vultures joined a Broad-winged Hawk on a rising thermal, and a crow briefly pursued the hawk, once again providing good size comparison, with all birds in one field of view.—Ty Baumann, Green Bay, WI.

**BLACK RAIL**  
(*Laterallus jamaicensis*)

**8 May 2007, Milwaukee Coast Guard Impoundment, Milwaukee County**—Last fall surveyors had cut long sighting lanes into the grass and weeds. At about 5:00 pm I stopped at one of these and noted a small dark rail I assumed was a Sora in the shadows about 125 yards away. I continued to study it with my binoculars as it came in and out of view and noted its consistently dark appearance at every light angle. There was no contrast to the bill and the feathering around its base. The bill was seemingly smaller—shorter and thinner—than that of a

Sora. As it moved around I could not discern any light undertail coverts. No distinctive plumage coloring or patterning was noted except for some lightish flank barring as it finally flapped its way into the grass. I felt tentatively confident about the ID as a Black Rail in spite of a lack of plumage details due to distance, but I wanted to conclusively eliminate Sora. About five minutes later a Sora did appear in about the same spot and lighting afforded indirect comparison. I had no problems discerning all of its characteristics—the yellow bill and plumage patterning stood out in all lighting conditions. The most impressive difference was the larger size of the Sora and the shorter tail of the dark bird, which was not moved actively around the vertical while feeding, as in the case of Soras.—John Idzikowski, Milwaukee, WI.

**LAUGHLING GULL**  
(*Larus atricilla*)

**9 May 2007, Racine, Racine County**—Among all the gulls at Shoop Park I noticed a medium-sized, slender bird slightly smaller than the nearby Ring-billed Gulls. It had a dark gray mantle, black wingtips with little or no white on the tips of the primaries, a complete black hood, dark eyes and a fairly narrow, incomplete white eye ring (broken in front and back of the eye), giving the bird a sleepy-eyed appearance. The nape, separating the black hood from the dark gray mantle, the underside and the tail were all white. The bill, which was a deep reddish-black color, was fairly long and of medium weight, with a conspicuous gonydeal angle and drooping tip. The





Figure 5. Black-legged Kittiwake at Sheboygan, Lake Michigan shore, by Scott Franke.



Figure 6. Dan Jackson caught the Sheboygan Black-legged Kittiwake in the fog.



Figure 7. Rock Wren on the roof by Scott Franke on 1 May 2007.



Figure 8. Rock Wren showing the undertail barring. Photographed by Scott Franke on 1 May 2007.

legs were rather long and slender with a color similar to or even slightly darker than the bill. In flight, the undersides of the primaries were black, in contrast to the grayish-white wing linings. There was a conspicuous white trailing edge to the dark gray wings.—*John Dixon, Kansasville, WI.*

**BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE**  
(*Rissa tridactyla*)

**30 May 2007, Sheboygan, Sheboygan County**—The bird was preening on a rock outcropping at North Point along the Lake Michigan shoreline. We watched it for 15 minutes from about 15 meters away. It was about the same size as the adjacent Ring-billed Gulls but with noticeably shorter legs. For plumage color and pattern we noted white underparts, gray mantle with some dark wing coverts, dark at the tips of the primaries, dark tail tip, dark ear spot, and dark smudges around the neck. For bare parts we noted black legs and a mostly dull yellow bill with a dark tip, slimmer and shorter than that of the Ring-billed Gulls, with dark on the ridges at the top and bottom. The kittiwake also differentiated itself from the other gulls by its awkward way of walking.—*David and Margaret Brasser, Sheboygan, WI.* [See Figures 5 and 6]

**BARN OWL**  
(*Tyto alba*)

**3 March 2007, Madison, Dane County**—At around 5:30 pm, Tom Prestby and I were driving to the Frautschi Point Parking Lot at Picnic Point to check out a reported Barn Owl when I spotted a large, interest-

ing-looking "raptor" flying over the Biocore Prairie/Eagle Heights Gardens. Given the rarity of Barn Owl in the state, I fully expected our "raptor" to be an unusual looking Red-tailed Hawk or perhaps a Short-eared Owl. From the road and inside our car we could not get much detail on the bird, so we decided to park and calmly walked to a better viewing area. Once out of the car I was surprised by what I saw. Even from a good distance I could tell the bird flying over the open fields was very pale and not a hawk. The large head and flat face of our bird clearly made it an owl. To distinguish this bird from Short-eared Owl, I recalled watching some of them hunting during the winter season just concluded. In my opinion, Short-eared Owls are more "mothlike" in flight than the bird we were observing. When they bank you always see their distinctive wing pattern, and those wings are long and relatively narrow. Short-ears also seem to hunt just above the tops of the grasses, arcing up higher only to change direction or move to a new hunting location. They appear to be quartering back and forth, eventually covering every square inch of a field. Our bird flew higher above the grasses and its hunting pattern seemed more random. I never saw the distinctive Short-eared Owl wing pattern whenever it banked. Instead, the underwings were pale and the wings were broader (especially at the base). Our bird also appeared short-wristed relative to a short-ear. At our closest approach, we could make out the light tan/brown upperpart coloration and pale face. Given more time, we would have grabbed our scopes from the car and studied the bird in more detail, but

after about five minutes of observation time it flew into the woods and didn't return.—*Aaron Stutz, Madison, WI.*

**SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER**  
(*Tyrannus forficatus*)

**28 May 2007, Ten Mile Creek Wildlife Management Area, St. Croix County**—The bird was an adult with pinkish color to the flanks extending to the breast and belly. The head was light silvery-white with a dark bill. The tail was patterned black and white and seemed about seven or eight inches long, extending far beyond the primary extensions. The wings were dark and the upper breast was similar in color to the head. The bird was perched on a small stalk facing into the wind and it would periodically fly out a short distance to catch flying insects. I lived in Texas for seven years and have seen thousands of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, including several hundred more during a trip there earlier this year. Nonetheless I enjoyed watching this individual for up to half an hour at distances as close as fifty feet.—*Larry Persico, Hudson, WI.*

**ROCK WREN**  
(*Salpinctes obsoletus*)

**30 April and 1 May 2007, Milwaukee, Milwaukee County**—First seen on a roof top (Fig. 7), this wren looked larger than a House Wren. Its bill appeared longer also and was thin and dark. The upper body was a tawny gray in color from crown to back. The rump and tail were a little more tan. The back was finely spotted

(whitish spots). The undersides were dirty white, with distinct buffy lower flanks and belly. The pale undertail coverts were patterned with dark barring. The throat and breast were lightly streaked (tawny gray on a dirty white background). There was a light supercilium (not very distinct) above a darker eye line extending from the base of the bill up to the nape. The lower wings and tail were barred. I finally was able to see the buff terminal tips on the tail during the second day's observations. The wren gave a single-note "tip" call as it bounced up and down. It appeared to be catching insects on the ground or on the roof tops. At one point it briefly clung to the side of a building. The bobbing up and down was incessant, even when the bird was moving around.—*Dennis Gustafson, Muskego, WI.*

**30 April 2007, Milwaukee, Milwaukee County**—I arrived at the sheds in Warnimont Park and found that the Rock Wren was still being seen. It was hopping around the grass in plain view and occasionally perched on the outbuildings. It was a medium-sized wren with a very long bill and flat head. Only the Canyon Wren exceeds it in these characters. The color of the head and back were a sandy brown. Toward the rump, the color was more of a reddish brown, as was the tail. The tail was marked with horizontal dashes (Fig. 8), as were the undertail coverts. The breast and belly were dull white with a slight buffy undertone. There was a faint eyeline but this was not as strong as a Bewick's or Sedge Wren would show. The bird fed out in the open and provided great views. Strange to think that I was seeing this bird again just a week after returning from Texas, where I had seen dozens



of them.—*Mark Korducki, New Berlin, WI.*

**PINE WARBLER**  
(*Dendroica pinus*)

**27 March, 2007, Wind Point, Racine County**—The previous evening I had located a Harris's Sparrow in the area north of the Shoop Park golf course, and at about 8:00 am I returned to see if it was still around. It wasn't, but in a horsechestnut tree nearby I noticed a small yellow bird feeding. My first thought was goldfinch, but when I looked through the binoculars I was surprised to find a warbler instead. It had a bright yellow throat, a white belly and undertail coverts, two bold white wing bars, dark streaks on the sides of the breast, long tail projection, olive-green upperparts, and broken yellow eye-ring. All these pointed to a mature male Pine Warbler. It moved more quickly than a Yellow-throated Vireo, which has yellow spectacles and wouldn't have streaks on its sides. A Prairie Warbler has bolder side streaking, is smaller, pumps its tail and has red streaks on its back. The lighting was good, there were no leaves on the tree, and I watched it from ten yards for fifteen minutes. I have seen many Pine Warblers but never this early in the season; in fact, I was unaware that this would turn into a record early arrival for the state.—*Rick Fare, Racine, WI.*

**WESTERN TANAGER**  
(*Piranga ludoviciana*)

**14 May 2007, Stevens Point, Portage County**—The bird was seen on the

north end of Kozickowski Park, on the trail running from the Peninsula to Della Street. It was perched about eight feet off the ground on a bare oak branch, in bright but filtered light with sunlight from behind. It had a distinct bright red face, throat, and parts of the head. The body was bright yellow with black wings and black notched tail. There was a distinct yellowish wingbar, in addition to a second wingbar, the color of which I can't recall. The tail was completely black. Its beak was dark and the eyes were black. The beak and body size and shape recalled Scarlet Tanager. The bird was perched in view for about twenty seconds and then flew down the trail and out of sight. I have never seen a Western Tanager before, but I have seen both Summer Tanager [2005] and Scarlet Tanager in the same area.—*Tricia Schaufenbuel, Stevens Point, WI.*

**PAINTED BUNTING**  
(*Passerina ciris*)

**10 May 2007, Milwaukee, Milwaukee County**—I was in Estabrook Park, west of the park drive, walking toward the lagoon on the east side of the drive, when I spotted bright red on the grass between the abandoned railroad track and the thick brush at the edge of the lagoon. Since I had been seeing Scarlet Tanagers that day, and this bird was brighter than a cardinal, that was my first thought. I was about 35 yards away and was jolted by what I saw when I raised my binoculars to the bird. It had a bright blue head, green back and wings, and brilliant red underparts. There is no other North American bird to confuse with male

Painted Bunting. Simultaneously, a coyote was trotting up the paved path in my direction, and not running away from me. I had only a three-second binocular look at the bunting and then all the birds in the area flew into the brush, no doubt in response to the approach of the coyote. I backed away, but the coyote was indifferent to my presence and just wanted to cross the road. After he ambled down the tracks out of view, I started a search for the Painted Bunting. One hour of searching yielded nothing, so I presume it moved on. Ordinarily I would not report such a rare bird with only three seconds of observation, but the plumage is so distinct in this species that I had absolute confidence in its identity. I obviously had no time to study structure or judge comparative size. It was obviously much smaller than a robin, but I had no other birds in my field of view during this brief sighting.—*Thomas Wood, Menomonee Falls, WI.*

**GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE**  
(*Quiscalus mexicanus*)

**3 May 2007, Dickeyville, Grant County**—I was by the marsh where Highway 61/35 crosses the Grant River, about three miles north of town. I was alerted by a loud up-slurred whistle to the presence of an unusual bird. I looked up and saw a

very large grackle—an all-black bird perched low on a cattail next to three Blue-winged Teal. This grackle was longer in length than the teal. Shortly after, it flew and I could see an enormous keel-shaped tail in flight, both very long and very wide. The grackle landed next to some Red-winged Blackbirds; it was roughly twice the length and several times their size. At one point, a Common Grackle flew up to it, exhibiting aggressive behavior. The Great-tailed Grackle was at least 50% larger. It had a very flat-crowned look. There was almost a straight line from the top of its head going into the bill, and it had yellow eyes. I watched it for about fifteen minutes from 50 to 75 yards as it would alternately perch on cattails and fly around the marsh.—*John Romano, Madison, WI.*



Dennis Malueg found this Willet at the beach in Menomonee Park in Oshkosh on 22 May 2007.



Black-and-white Warbler by Scott Franke

## 50 Years Ago in *The Passenger Pigeon*

With all of today's concern (and rightfully so) over bird fatalities at tall structures, the first article in this issue is by Charles Kemper entitled *Destruction at the TV Tower*. This paper documents the first three significant bird kills discovered by Charles at an Eau Claire TV tower in the fall of 1957. He estimated the kills on 29 August at 300–500 birds and on September 3 at 300–400 birds, and then, on September 20 he conservatively estimated the kill at 20,000 birds. People in the neighborhood were raking dead birds like leaves into piles. Charles was able to recover 1,525 birds of 40 species from this kill. Warblers comprised about 90% of the total. Noteworthy counts were 285 Ovenbirds and 241 Bay-breasted Warblers (highest species totals), 64 Connecticut Warblers, 25 Philadelphia Vireos, and 1 (Nelson's) Sharp-tailed Sparrow. Dr. Kemper continued to monitor this location for 45 years and recorded a peak 1-night kill of 11,000 birds.

His 1996 article in *The Passenger Pigeon* (*A study of bird mortality at a west central Wisconsin TV tower from 1957-1995*) is still widely cited and is available at: <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/EcoNatRes/EcoNatRes-idx?type=header&id=EcoNatRes.pp58n03>.

There is a nice recent article and picture of Charles at: <http://dukemagazine.duke.edu/dukemag/issues/030407/depmini-kemper.html>.

Starting in 1958 and continuing for 19 years, Mrs. Alfred (Phyllis) Holz served as WSO's Treasurer. Phyllis died in Allouez on 31 October 2007 at the age of 96. She taught in the Green Bay area for many years. She and her husband, Alfred, who was WSO President in 1962 and 1963, received WSO's Silver Passenger Pigeon award in 1967.

*Excerpt from Vol. 20(1), 1958 by WSO Historian Noel J. Cutright, 3352 Knollwood Road, West Bend, WI 53095. h. 262 .675. 2443, w. 262. 268. 3617, [noel.cutright@we-energies.com](mailto:noel.cutright@we-energies.com).*

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**Scott Franke** has been a birding enthusiast for 30 years and an amateur photographer for the past three. He and his wife, Dawn, are parents of two active youngsters, Seth and Michelle, and live in Wauwatosa. Scott works as an information technology manager at Northwestern Mutual. During his leisure time, he works at capturing the perfect bird image—breeding plumage, warm light, a classic behavioral pose. Many weekend mornings, you will find Scott enjoying one of southeastern Wisconsin's great birding venues. His images are available at: <http://www.pbase.com/srfdrf>.

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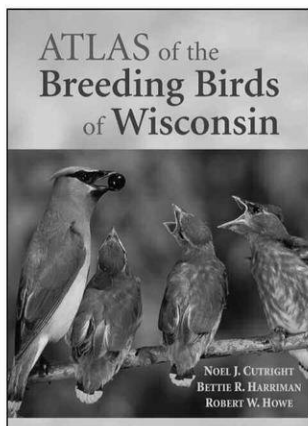
**Dennis Malueg**, a serious amateur wildlife photographer, travels Wisconsin each year in search of his bird and other wildlife photos. He also takes many of his pictures at his home in Waushara County which includes yard, prairie, and an 80-acre forest.

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**Patrick Ready** is a graphic designer who lives in Stoughton, Wisconsin, where he keeps a watchful eye on the summer resident Osprey that nest on the Yahara River. He has been interested in birds and wildlife since his youthful days back in the 60s. Painting and photographing birds have become his passionate hobbies over the past nine years. Patrick has donated both paintings and photos to silent auctions to benefit the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, the Madison Audubon Society, and the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin. He is the editor/designer of the *Wisconsin Bluebird* and designs the newsletter, CAWS, for Madison Audubon. When he is not busy with bird activities he and his wife Deb enjoy kayaking, nature hikes, and traveling.

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## *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Wisconsin*

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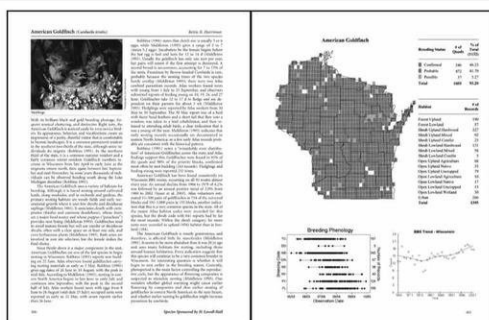
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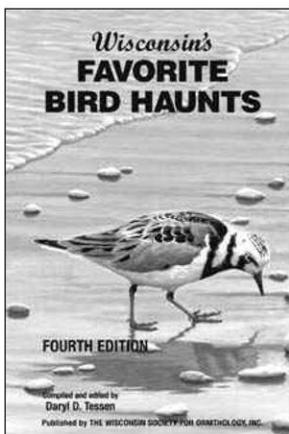
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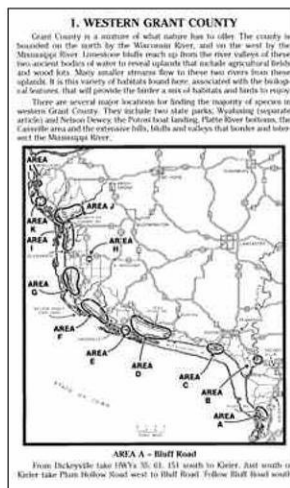


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SPRING 2008

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