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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.

Cover Figure: Pair of Eastern Towhees in springtime by Dennis Malueg.

Salute to Citizen Scientists

I recently spent a few hours sending notes of thanks on behalf of our Society to 11 birders who devoted an enormous amount of time and effort entering information from Sam Robbins' *"Wisconsin Birdlife"* into the eBird database.

The volunteer effort was spearheaded by Aaron Stutz and included Chuck Heikkinen, Stuart Malcolm, Cynthia Bridge, Rob Pendergast, Mike Wanger, Max Witynski, Tim Hahn, Ellen Klusmeier, Nolan Pope, and Nick Anich. These WSO volunteers spent nearly 100 hours working with the eBird team—Andy Paulios, Ryan Brady, Tom Prestby, Nick Anich, Owen Boyle, and Murray Berner—entering and analyzing all the sightings in *Wisconsin Birdlife*. (I'm told Chuck Heikkinen deserves special recognition for entering data for close to 200 species.)

All the sightings from Sam's marvelous book have now been entered into a spreadsheet—4,177 different observations were gleaned from the text. All the data still need to be error-checked, and that will probably occur this winter. Then the data will be uploaded into eBird.

WSO Records Committee Chair Ryan Brady saluted this project at a meeting of the WSO Board of Directors, and I had asked him to send me the volunteers' names so that I could thank them. Here, in part, is what I said to each of them:

> "Your work is a boon not only to the Society, whose funding supports the Wisconsin eBird portal, but also to thousands of individual birders throughout the state and elsewhere. Perhaps most importantly you are carrying forward ornithology's great tradition of citizen science in enriching the eBird database. eBird's goal is to maximize the utility and accessibility of the vast numbers of bird observations made each year by recreational and professional bird watchers. Thanks, in part, to you, it is amassing one of the largest and fastest growing biodiversity data resources in existence.
>
> "One of my goals as WSO president is to tap the talents of our members to serve our threefold mission to enjoy, study, and protect Wisconsin's birdlife. Thank you for being a part of that."

The time it took to send out thank-yous was repaid tenfold with a follow-up note I got from Aaron Stutz, who shared this background and perspective:

> "Sam Robbins' *Wisconsin Birdlife*, published in 1991, is *the* book when it comes to the status, habitat, migration, breeding, and wintering presence of Wisconsin's birds. I can recall Sam commenting in the late 1990s—he was in his mid to late 70s at the time—that someone (other than him) should eventually update *Wisconsin Birdlife*.
>
> "Sam was—and still is—a Wisconsin birding institution. When I came to the Madison birding scene in the late '90s Sam was everywhere—compiling

the CBC, writing articles for the *Passenger Pigeon* and *Bird Haunts*, and frequently commenting on the Wisbirdn email list. One of my favorite birding memories was a trip along Lake Michigan in February of 1999 with Sam and Peter Bridge—I was a novice birder and picked up numerous lifers. We targeted gulls and Sam showed me my lifer Iceland, Glaucous, and Great Black-backed Gulls. I remember being the first in the group to spot a Harlequin Duck at Sheboygan. Sam was kind and encouraging—he complimented me on my quick find.

"While not a true update to *Wisconsin Birdlife*, eBird complements Sam's work in many ways. Its popularity took off in the late 2000s and the various *Explore Data* features document the same aspects of bird distribution that Sam captured with his excellent prose in the species accounts of *Wisconsin Birdlife*."

Once the *Wisconsin Birdlife* data are uploaded into eBird the Wisconsin eBird data set will contain most of the significant bird sightings through 1990. With eBird taking off in the early 2000s, Aaron says, the eBird data set will have only a few historical gaps. (1990–2000 would be the largest area of concern.) That's why there are plans to eventually enter data from all *Passenger Pigeons* into eBird.

So how many WSO members are using eBird? How many more are at least aware of its importance?

Way back in 2007, WSO Field Trip Co-coordinator Tom Schultz posted an article on our web site asking members: "Do you want to make an important contribution to ornithology? Do you want your bird observations to become a part of a HUGE database of bird sightings from all across the continent? Do you want an easy way to compile your personal birding life lists and county bird totals? If you do, then please consider becoming a part of *eBird*."

Tom explained then that *eBird* was a fast-growing project of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology that enabled birders to submit their sightings over the internet—through the website: www.ebird.org. And he predicted that "in the very near future this will become an important part of the way that WSO compiles bird sightings from birders around the state for the quarterly seasonal reports."

Tom was absolutely correct—on both a global and local scale. Globally, *eBird* is now gathering as many as 3.1 million bird observations a month. And here at home the data contained within the Passenger Pigeon Field Notes have transitioned from paper-derived summary county checklists to electronically-submitted daily *eBird* checklists. Today, the *eBird* database is the primary source used to prepare quarterly seasonal field reports. Not only has the number of reports going to the seasonal editors increased considerably with *eBird*, but the data search and analysis tools it offers make it an invaluable resource for analyzing seasonal patterns among various species.

As *eBird* has evolved, so has WSO's relationship with *eBird*. Wisconsin got its own portal http://ebird.org/content/wi in January 2007 and its eBird team monitors page content and creates and posts articles of special interest to Wisconsin birders, all under the stewardship of the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative. Even birders who are not regularly recording their sightings should

be using the site to improve their enjoyment of the state's birdlife. Here's a one-month sample of just how on top of things the team is: Rare late fall hummingbirds now in Wisconsin; Wisconsin's Winter Finch Update #1; Hotspot of the Month—Loon Lake SWA; North American Red Crossbill Types: Status and Flight Call Identification.

Wisconsin eBird is also the site to go to if you just want to go see a particular bird. For example, you can find all of the places in Wisconsin where folks have reported seeing Yellow-headed Blackbirds (or Red-headed Woodpeckers or Blue-headed Vireos), and once you find a place, you can access a Google map for the site and directions on how to get there.

But *eBird* costs money to operate. Part of its sources of funding has been to sell portals for individual states. That's why the WSO Board voted unanimously to guarantee funding for the Wisconsin portal for the next five years (**see note at end on how you can help**). "This is how records will be compiled as we go forward. WSO needs to keep a foot in every electronic toehold," one board member said.

This is also a good time and place to plug *BirdLog*, the definitive app for entering your eBird checklists via your smart phone. I first saw it touted on the Wisconsin Birding Facebook page by David A. La Puma, a birder and Visiting Scientist at the SILVIS Lab at UW-Madison. But I've seen it used firsthand by several birding buddies who've e-shared their eBird checklists, including Joan Sommer and Rebecca Setzer, the new chair of the WSO Communications Committee, who says "BirdLog NA is the most awesome app out there!" She adds: "I got the email announcing the app, purchased the app and started using the app all on the same day while in the field with the Riveredge Bird Club. BirdLog has saved me countless hours of checklist entering this year. It is by far the most useful birding app on my phone. Rumor has it the app is getting a facelift and the new version might be out next year. Some possible upgrades could include GPS route tracking and photo embedding. I can't wait to see what they do next!"

Here's the website: http://www.birdseyebirding.com/index.php/2012-09-27-00-35-10/birdlog-north-america

Your Help is Needed to Support *eBird*

When the *Wisconsin eBird* portal was initiated in 2007, funding came from the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI) at a cost of $1,000 a year. In May 2011, the cost for a new portal contract jumped to $1,500 annually, at which point WBCI and the DNR came to WSO.

The WSO Board voted unanimously to contract with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to support the Wisconsin portal for five years. For 2011 and 2012, WBCI and WSO each contributed $500, while two members of the WSO board donated $250 each.

Over the next three years, WSO is asking its members to help underwrite at

least $500 in support for the Wisconsin portal, and is making a special appeal to *eBird* users.

Like public broadcasting, eBird is offered FREE of charge and needs support from voluntary contributions. Even $10 or $20 a year from each of its many users would provide considerable assistance toward maintaining the Wisconsin portal.

Contributions in any amount will go into a segregated fund to help maintain it. You can make a donation online at http://wsobirds.org/?page_id=2276 by going to (2) Special Funds and specifying an amount under ***Wisconsin eBird Portal.*** Or you can send a check made payable to WSO to Christine Reel, 2022 Sherryl Lane, Waukesha, WI 53188. Indicate that the donation is for *eBird.*

Carl Schwartz

President

American Redstart photographed by Bob Larson.

Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*) Abundance Patterns and Trends in WSO-sponsored Bird Reporting Programs and Other Datasets

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ABSTRACT

Because of their long-term decline, Short-eared Owls warrant conservation attention. Their great variability in abundance and difficulty of detection hinder effective monitoring. We compared Short-eared Owl (SEO) abundance indices from our 1997–2010 walking and driving surveys at Buena Vista Wildlife Area (Portage County) to county and statewide Short-eared Owl indices during 1990–2010 or 2011 from the Passenger Pigeon and other sources. We also compared these other counts and surveys to each other. Where possible we corrected Short-eared Owl counts for effort. The number of counties reporting SEO in the Passenger Pigeon season summary was a strong indicator for Portage County SEO presence and for our summer indices. Our daytime and crepuscular survey results correlated more strongly with other programs than our nocturnal results, which were often negatively correlated. CBC and the Wisconsin Checklist Project correlated to other indices when matched on the same spatial scale (statewide rather than the Swengel study confined to one area) and time scale (seasonal or annual). Efforts with lower samples such as Big Days, North American Migration Counts, and May Day Counts had little correlation with other programs. Since 1990 Short-eared Owls have declined significantly on May Day Counts and in the Wisconsin Checklist Project. Wisconsin Christmas Bird Counts do not show a negative trend. This may relate to the many warmer than average winters during the study period. Generalized summer bird surveys (including those focused on grasslands) produce so few owl records in most

programs that they have limited utility for Short-eared Owl monitoring. But large programs using many birdwatcher days like the Passenger Pigeon season summary, the Christmas Bird Count, and the Wisconsin Checklist Project produced numerous logical and robust patterns both compared to one another and over time.

INTRODUCTION

Short-eared Owls (*Asio flammeus*) are of conservation concern because of their steep population decline, including an 85–90% drop in Canada and a 67–93% decline in the United States on Breeding Bird Surveys since 1966 (Environment Canada 2010, Sauer et al. 2011). The Wisconsin Checklist Project (Rolley 2011) has registered very low years for the species 2008–2010, which is concerning for its Wisconsin status. Monitoring is essential for successful conservation action (Buckland et al. 2008), and to be effective, it is necessary to understand the species' variation in daily, seasonal, and annual detection (e.g., Poulin et al. 2001). Results should be efficiently obtained while also mirroring true population changes (Hochachka et al. 2000, Buckland et al. 2008). The Short-eared Owl's large interannual variability in local abundance (e.g. Hamerstrom 1972, Kinziger 1997, Evrard 2006, Rolley 2011) and largely crepuscular and nocturnal activity (Beske and Champion 1971, Clark 1975, Kinziger 1997, Swengel and Swengel 2009) create challenges for effective monitoring (Calladine et al. 2010, Keyes 2011).

Some data on Short-eared Owls come from formal systematic surveys, whether targeting them specifically or grassland birds more generally. Our study combines a mixed strategy (Swengel and Swengel 2002, 2009): 1) including this species in a high-effort grassland bird survey on foot at many sites that generated many observations of other target species even when we found few Short-eared Owls (Swengel and Swengel 2000), and 2) evening, dusk, and nighttime drives and watches designed to obtain higher Short-eared Owl detection rates (Swengel and Swengel 2002). Detection rates of animals in large-scale multi-species sampling are highly correlated with population sizes determined for those species by intensive single species studies (Hochachka et al. 2000). Our targeted surveys for Short-eared Owls occurred in three Wisconsin grasslands (Buena Vista, Leola, Pine Island) during 1997–2011 in the context of our extensive daytime surveys during the growing season there and at about 150 grasslands in seven states (Swengel and Swengel 1999, 2000, 2001) during 1988–2011.

However, such studies are relatively few. Other data on Short-eared Owls occur in general bird monitoring programs (e.g. the Christmas Bird Count, North American Breeding Bird Survey), national raptor monitoring schemes (e.g. Saurola 2009), and in season summary data or checklist data reported by birdwatchers to state and national organizations and websites.

Here we compare these two types of datasets: those from our own systematic surveys and those found in "opportunistic" data from Wisconsin (e.g., Bielefeldt and Rosenfield 2003) available in ornithological publications. Our goal is to investigate how

well these datasets relate to each other, in order to investigate the efficacy of these datasets for monitoring the Short-eared Owl. We also calculate trend over time in these datasets. If patterns from different survey schemes exhibit strong concordance, then we can have more confidence in the ability of these programs to monitor Short-eared Owls than if there is weak or no agreement among datasets. Our results should be useful for providing information on variation in both detectability and abundance of Wisconsin's Short-eared Owls on seasonal, annual, and long-term (multi-decadal) scales. An understanding of these patterns of variation can be used to increase the efficiency and success of monitoring this species.

METHODS

Walking surveys—

One source of data for this paper comes from the formal transects we have conducted on foot at 150 grasslands in seven states 1988–2011 (Swengel and Swengel 1999, 2000, 2001). These sites were selected for their conservation value to prairie species. Most were reserves and consisted mostly of never tilled grassland of primarily native prairie flora. In Wisconsin, we added other sites to the study, mostly after 1996, that were old fields reverted to permanent grassland cover dominated by non-native flora, following a previous more intensive agricultural use. We also surveyed pine barrens (Swengel 1998). Of these, the "brush prairie" at and near Crex Meadows in northwestern Wisconsin has potential to serve as Short-eared Owl habitat. At two Wisconsin sites, we recorded Short-eared Owls. Buena Vista Grassland (or Marsh), a Wildlife Area in Portage County, is one of the largest grasslands east of the Mississippi River, with about 5,000 ha of public land and a large amount of surrounding private grassland (Wisconsin DNR 1995, Toepfer 2003, Berner 2009). Leola Marsh Wildlife Area (Adams County) is an old field 6 km south of Buena Vista.

We conducted unlimited width transect surveys (as in Powell 2006) along similar routes each year (Swengel and Swengel 1999), while walking at a slow pace (1.5–2 km/hr) on parallel routes 5–10 m apart. These daytime walking surveys (more than 2 hours after sunrise and more than 2 hours before sunset) were originally designed to survey butterflies. Total transect effort was about 1820 hours and >4050 km of walking. We counted adults of all observed butterflies, as well as selected grassland bird species (listed in Swengel and Swengel 2000), detected by sight or sound ahead and to the sides, to the limit at which a species could be identified. During the entire study we recorded all Short-eared Owls and a few other rare grassland birds, such as Henslow's Sparrow (*Ammodramus henslowi*). We gradually phased in other bird study species, until all species of grassland birds were recorded 1997–present. We extended these surveys at Buena Vista into late fall 2000 after a massive Short-eared Owl year there and began doing walking surveys there year-round in March 2001. These surveys occurred during April-December 1997–2011 at Leola.

At each site, a new census unit was designated whenever the fixed route

changed in vegetation type, degree of floristic degradation, or management. The prairies varied greatly in site size and in how many units were needed to complete a route, so that units at these sites varied greatly in length. At Buena Vista and some other large, relatively level old fields, it was feasible to standardize the survey route to an 800 m square (200 m per side), typically set in the center of a 40 acre square block of land. Some units had to be divided in half (two 400 m transects) when a management treatment occurred in only half the unit. At the prairie sites, unit size and route length varied due to variation in size of land management treatments and/or variation in vegetative characteristics.

Short-eared Owl adults and young of the year were recorded separately, but we undoubtedly classified some fledged young as adults in an effort to count young conservatively (i.e., locally bred, as per Breeding Bird Atlas Guidelines: Cutright et al. 2006). We also recorded all owls detected between arrival and departure from the parking spot for a unit but outside the time span and/or unit boundaries of the formal survey. Thus, we distinguished between adults and juveniles, and individuals within the unit being surveyed or as on an unlimited width transect (i.e., outside the unit). We did not attempt to find nests but if we flushed an owl off a nest, we approached no more closely to the nest, walked quickly away from the nest, and did not walk into the unit again until well after fledgling would have occurred, in an effort to reduce researcher disturbance to the birds and nests.

Driving surveys—

At Buena Vista and Leola, these surveys consisted of driving around the sites with occasional scans and short walks into the grassland. These observations evolved out of bird-watching trips in fall and winter to Buena Vista and Leola, when we stayed until sunset or later to watch for Greater Prairie-Chickens (*Tympanuchus cupido*) flying to roost. Some daytime drives covered areas between walking surveys (time spent on walking surveys was deducted out of total time spent on the driving survey), while other daytime and all crepuscular and nighttime drives maximized area covered with minimal route repetition within a "session." We recorded the start and end time and weather conditions of each session, and the time when we considered it too dark to scan effectively for birds. Most owls observed after this time were seen in headlight beams. Driving surveys occurred in a wider range of times of day, including before sunrise and especially after sunset, and in all months of the year, but not in summer at Pine Island. Analyzable data from driving surveys started in November 1999, when we started observing Short-eared Owls regularly at Buena Vista near and at dusk and kept more detailed notes on when observation periods started and ended, where we went, and how many we observed of each target species. We surveyed by driving nearly every month 2000–2011. Total effort by driving and point scans was >1250 hours.

We noted whether each owl contact (record, or episode of observing an individual owl at a particular time and place) was distinguishable as a juvenile or not as on walking surveys. We

coded each contact by whether we judged it to be a new individual or a repeat observation of an individual previously recorded during a driving session that day. We also identified when we thought it was too dark to observe birds reliably without headlight beams (equivalent to civil twilight), without foreknowledge of the timing of civil twilight (defined as the end time before sunrise and start time after sunset when it is too dark to conduct typical outdoor activities without artificial illumination). We then obtained civil twilight tables based on the relationship of earth to sun from www.usno.navy.mil/ (website of the U.S. Naval Observatory), using Wisconsin Rapids. However, the website explains that weather conditions and lunar phase can affect when a certain level of darkness is actually reached. We used these tables for dates on which we were not there at civil twilight to record when that happened.

Other datasets—

We examined the *Passenger Pigeon* for other sources of data on Short-eared Owl occurrence in Wisconsin (season summary, WSO Christmas Bird Counts, May Day Counts, Big Days, North American Migration Count) from 1990 to 2010. Wisconsin Checklist Index methods are described in Rolley (2004) and we extracted data from Rolley (2011).

Data analysis—

The grassland in Wisconsin where we regularly recorded Short-eared Owls on walking surveys was Buena Vista. We have a few additional records at Leola, but we conducted only 38 walking surveys there. Since Buena Vista was the only site consistently surveyed in nearly every season, we calculated owl abundance indices only for Buena Vista. For the same reason, we calculated abundance indices on driving surveys only for Buena Vista.

For both our walking and driving sessions, we were conservative in counting Short-eared Owls. Even if observation of the bird was not continuous (for example, the owl hovered and swooped to the ground and flew up again, or flew out of sight and then flew back in view, or its perch site was not continuously visible to us because of obscuring topography), but periodically we observed an individual in the same general locality while we were conducting one visit to that area, then we counted it as one continuous contact. We attributed birds as repeats if seen in the same general area during a different pass through the area on the same date. However, we started over in counting contacts as new or repeats between days, and within day between the walking surveys and later driving sessions, because we did not feel confident we could individuate birds and properly assign which were new or repeat. We include both new and repeat contacts in many analyses here, because we were interested in portraying detection indices rather than actual number of owls present in the area, an impossible task.

We divided our observations into four seasons: winter (1 December to 15 March); spring (16 March to 30 April); summer (1 May to 31 August); and fall (1 September to 30 November). This is based on the approximate seasonal timing we observed for Short-eared Owls: primary spring and fall passage occurs in those seasons as

we defined them, and breeding behavior primarily in summer as we defined it.

For each season from January 2000 through August 2010 at Buena Vista Grassland, we computed observation rates of the total number of Short-eared Owl contacts recorded per total amount of time spent on driving sessions in each of these daily time "periods": diurnal (session entirely 1 hr after morning civil twilight and 1 hr before evening civil twilight); early evening (session ending within 1 hr but before evening civil twilight); late evening (session ending at evening civil twilight); and nocturnal (session beginning at or after evening civil twilight). We excluded from driving sessions time and birds recorded in walking surveys. By the same method, we also calculated a combined crepuscular index and a combined nocturnal index, by totaling the contacts in each combined time period divided by the total survey time in the combined period.

For comparison, we calculated the observation rate during daytime grassland walking surveys treated as a separate diurnal period.

We calculated a composite index for each season each year, as the mean of the seasonal index in every period: diurnal walking and the four driving periods (diurnal, early crepuscular, late crepuscular, nocturnal). When a season had one missing value for any of these five periods, we interpolated it. For example, if a winter was missing a value for a diurnal walking index of Short-eared Owls, we used the ratio of walking survey indices to the other four indices in the other three seasons that year to determine the winter walking index. If the sum of spring, summer, and fall walking indices = 3, and the sum of all the other indices in those seasons = 6, then 50% of the sum of available indices in winter is the interpolated index for the diurnal walking surveys in that winter. If a season had more than one missing value, we did not calculate a composite index. We also calculated an annual average (sum of the 4 season averages of a calendar year/4).

Short-eared Owl (SEO) records were obtained for December 1989 to summer 2010 or later from the Wisconsin Checklist Annual Index (N=21) (Temple and Cary 1987, Rolley 2004, 2011), and from the *Passenger Pigeon*: WSO season summaries (N=82) including SEO reported presence/absence in Portage County, WSO Christmas Bird Counts (N=21, 1989 CBC assigned to "winter 1990" and so on, for analysis; e.g., Hilsenhoff 1990, Domagalski 2011), May Day Counts, Big Days, and North American Migration Counts. We calculated several kinds of Short-eared Owl abundance indices (presence-absence, abundance) corrected several ways for effort (per hour, per season, number of observers) on several spatial scales (county, statewide) (Table 1). December data were considered part of the winter of the following year. These were analyzed untransformed, or transformed to correct for effort (e.g., the percent of CBCs with SEO presence and SEO rate/party-hour on CBCs). The WSO SEO Counties (corrected) variable was created to deal with the marked increase in observers after 2007. Since the great majority of these ca. 300 observers are reporting just a few birds via e-bird, the increase in observers does not represent 3–4 times as much effort as the 75–100

Table 1. Data sources (and variable names) used for analysis other than Swengel survey data.

*Christmas Bird Count (CBC; excludes count week SEOs)
% of CBCs with any SEOs = N CBCs with any SEO/Total CBCs held
CBC SEOs per hour = total SEO individuals on all CBCs/total party-hours of all CBCs
*Wisconsin Annual Checklist Index (started by Stan Temple, run by DNR now [Temple et al. 1997, Rolley 2004, 2011]) = % of weekly birdwatcher checklists with an SEO in each year
**Passenger Pigeon* Season Summary
N observers = number of observers contributing to the season summary
SEO Counties (raw) = N counties reporting SEOs in each season summary; winter index excludes Christmas Bird Count data
SEO Counties (corrected) correcting for increased N observers recently = SEO Counties/square root of N observers
Annual average SEO Counties (raw) = (sum of SEO counties for all 4 seasons of a calendar year/4
Annual average SEO Counties (corrected) = sum of SEO corrected counties for all 4 seasons of a calendar year/4
Portage County SEO presence: presence=1, absence=0 of SEOs reported for Portage County to WSO in that season
Annual Portage County Index=sum of Portage County SEO presences for 4 seasons of a calendar year (range of possible values is 0–4)
**Peak # of SEOs reported anywhere in Wisconsin that season
**Peak SEO count for Portage County, if provided: blank if SEOs seen in county but the peak # is not printed
Big Day
Big Days in Wisconsin finding any SEO
North American Migration Count (done on a county scale)
Total SEOs seen
**# SEOs on Portage County count—blank if no count in Portage County
May Day Count (done on a county scale)
May Day Counts finding any SEO that spring
% of May Day counts finding any SEO that spring
**Portage May Day Count: 1=held, 0=no count
**SEO found (1) or not (0) on Portage County May Day (Note: May Day report only lists presence-absence)

* = SEO indices with a value also calculated for the previous season or year.
**Variables that did not turn out to be useful, usually because not enough positive numbers existed.

"hard core" people who reported before 2008. As a result, we chose to divide WSO SEO Counties by the square root of N observers instead of by N observers.

We calculated annual average indices for data with four seasons per year, such as Portage County SEO presence and WSO SEO Counties (raw and corrected for N observers). These were the sum of the four seasons' indices for each variable, divided by four. We interpolated an annual average for Portage County SEO presence in the five years it was missing a value for one season (usually in fall). In those cases we counted the missing season as having the same probability of SEO presence as the other three seasons that year; if one of the other three seasons had an SEO presence reported for Portage County (a probability of 0.33), we counted the annual index as 1.33 (out of a possible 4).

We compared patterns in these indices to each other and for trend over time. We also compared these indices to Swengel seasonal indices from

Table 2. Spearman rank correlations of Swengel abundance indices with N Counties reporting SEO (raw and corrected for observer effort); probability values given when P<0.10.

	N counties (raw)			N counties (corrected)		
	N	r	P	N	r	P
Spring						
diurnal walking	12	+0.092		12	+0.175	
diurnal driving	12	+0.013		12	+0.071	
early crepuscular	10	+0.171		12	+0.231	
late crepuscular	11	+0.115		11	+0.127	
combined crepuscular	11	+0.202		11	+0.318	
nocturnal	10	–0.222		10	-0.767	<0.01
composite	11	+0.110		11	+0.282	
Summer						
diurnal walking	14	+0.497	<0.10	14	+0.566	<0.05
diurnal driving	14	+0.748	<0.01	14	+0.718	<0.01
early crepuscular	11	+0.736	<0.01	11	+0.823	<0.005
late crepuscular	11	+0.686	<0.05	11	+0.841	<0.005
combined crepuscular	11	+0.709	<0.05	11	+0.832	<0.005
nocturnal	11	+0.347		11	+0.474	
composite	11	+0.408		11	+0.543	
All seasons						
diurnal walking	45	+0.351	<0.05	45	+0.389	<0.01
combined crepuscular	43	+0.291	<0.10	43	+0.344	<0.05
composite	42	+0.160		42	+0.221	

Buena Vista. We also calculated Swengel SEO presence/absence at Buena Vista by season using the same season dates as in the *Passenger Pigeon*. Some indices were compared to the previous season's or year's same index to check for "predictive power" of earlier indices. We computed all statistics with ABstat 7.20 software (Anderson-Bell 1994). Significance was initially set as a two-tailed $P < 0.05$. We used the Spearman rank correlation to test for significant correlations and the Mann-Whitney U test to test for significant differences between samples. Since significant results occurred overall at a frequency above that expected due to spurious Type I statistical error, we did not lower the *P* value further, as many more Type II errors (biologically meaningful patterns lacking statistical significance) would then be created than Type I errors eliminated. Also, we were interested in patterns of positive or negative correlations (whether significant or not). Analyses go through 2009, 2010, or 2011 according to what data were available at the time of analysis.

Results

Comparisons among programs—

"SEO Counties" (N Counties reporting SEO in the *Passenger Pigeon* season summary), both raw and corrected for N observers, were the strongest indicators of other Short-eared Owl datasets. The positive relationship of SEO Counties to Portage County SEO presence is described below. In summer both variables for SEO Counties correlated with nearly every Swengel survey type at Buena Vista except nocturnal (Table 2, Fig.

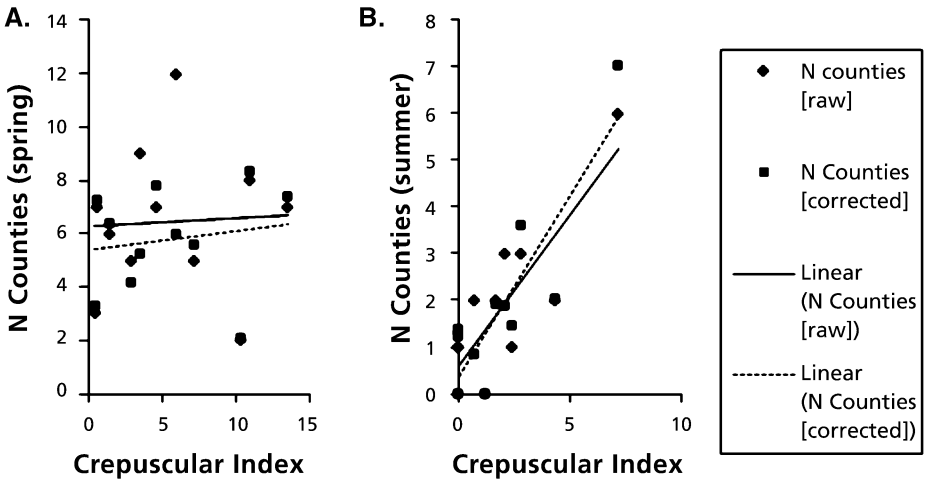

Figure 1. Correlation of combined crespuscular index in Swengel study to N Counties reporting SEO (raw and corrected for N observers) for (a) spring (Spearman rank correlation r=+0.202 for raw, r = +0.318 for corrected, N=11 and P>0.10 for both) and (b) summer (r=+0.709 and P<0.05 for raw, r=+832 and P<0.01 for corrected, N=11 for both).

1b), and also not with the composite index that averaged all Swengel survey types. By contrast, the spring indices did not significantly correlate with one another (Table 2, Fig. 1a). Including all seasons, SEO Counties (corrected) covaried with the Swengel combined crepuscular index and both SEO Counties measures covaried with the Swengel walking transect indices (Table 2).

Portage County SEO presence was also an indicator of several other SEO measures, both compared to Swengel surveys at Buena Vista (in Portage County) and to other statewide datasets obtained from the *Passenger Pigeon*. Portage County SEO presence not only correlated positively (but usually not significantly) with nonnocturnal Swengel indices at Buena Vista in summer (Fig. 2) and all seasons combined, but also very highly with SEO Counties (raw and corrected for N observers) for spring (Fig. 3), summer (Fig 4), all seasons, and annual averages (Fig. 5). Portage County SEO presence did not relate to SEO Counties (raw or corrected) in fall or winter. Statewide SEO Counties was 6–7 times as high in summers when Portage County reported SEO presence as when it did not (Fig. 4). Portage County (as per the *Passenger Pigeon*) and Buena Vista (as evidenced in Swengel data) are SEO hotspots registering a seasonal presence that is 9 times and 18 times as high (counting all seasons), respectively, as reported for the remaining 71 counties in Wisconsin (excluding Portage County). Counting summer only, Portage County has 40 times as high a reported Short-eared Owl presence as the rest of Wisconsin.

However, Portage County SEO presence did not relate strongly to Swengel indices at Buena Vista in spring (Fig. 6), fall, or winter. In the Swengel dataset, SEO was recorded as present

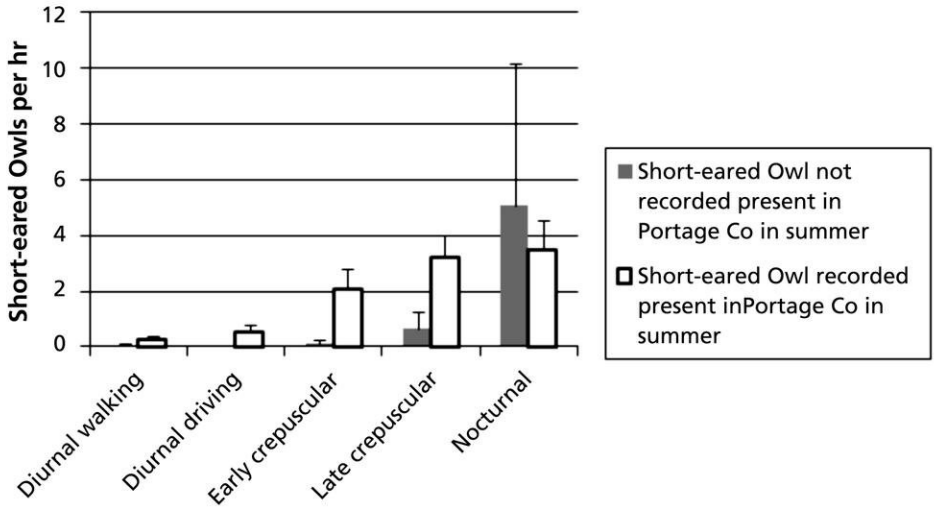

Figure 2. Comparison of whether Short-eared Owl was reported in Portage County in the *Passenger Pigeon* season summary to abundance indices in the Swengel study, for summer. All correlations positive; the one with diurnal driving was significant ($r = +0.652$, $N = 14$, $P < 0.01$).

in 49 of 53 (92%) seasons at Buena Vista studied through winter 2011–12. In 41 matched seasons, Portage County had 65% presence (24/37) in seasons recorded as present in the Swengel dataset and 25% presence in absent seasons in the Swengel dataset. Since the Swengel dataset had only four absences (summer 1998, 2002, 2004, 2007), correlations with that variable have no statistical power to detect covariance except in summer. Two of our seasons used different dates than WSO does. The difference had no effect on calculations of Swengel presence-absence in summer. In all summers where we recorded SEO (defined as 1 May to 31 August), we also recorded SEO in summer as defined by WSO (1 June to 31 July). For two winters, we recorded SEO only in 1–15 March (2009–10, 2010–11), which WSO defines as part of spring. In both those winters, SEO was recorded as present in Portage County in the *Passenger Pigeon*.

Swengel diurnal and crepuscular indices correlated more with other sources of SEO data than Swengel nocturnal indices did (e.g., Fig. 2). Nocturnal indices were negatively correlated with most CBC, SEO County, Wisconsin Checklist, and Portage County indices except summer SEO Counties, although these positive correlations were not significant (Table 2). The correlation was most strongly negative in spring (Table 2) when night drives produced the lowest percent of Swengel SEO detections of any season (see Fig. 2 in Swengel and Swengel 2009).

In contrast to the SEO's regular occurrence at Buena Vista and Leola, we found none in >1800 km of diurnal walking surveys at >30 Wisconsin prairies, grasslands, and brush prairies during 1988–2011. Likewise, 715 Wis-

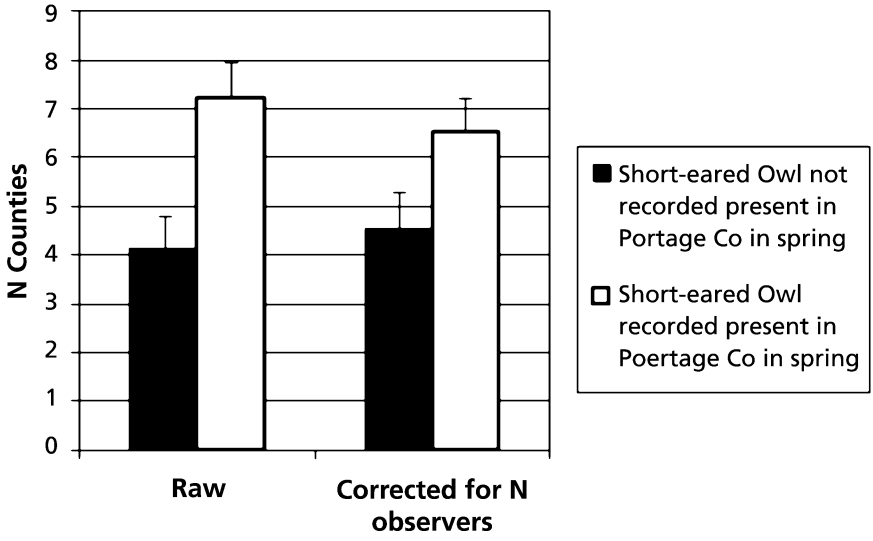

Figure 3. Comparison of whether Short-eared Owl was reported in Portage County with N counties reporting the species statewide (raw or corrected for N observers), for spring in the *Passenger Pigeon* season summary. Spearman rank correlation r = +0.600 and P < 0.05 for raw, r = +0.384 and P < 0.10 for corrected, N = 21 for both.

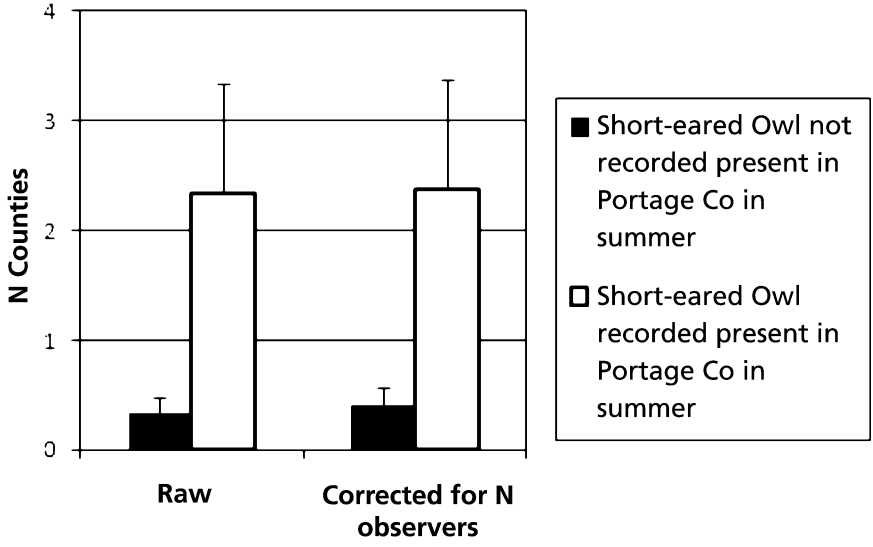

Figure 4. Comparison of whether Short-eared Owl was reported in Portage County with to N counties reporting the species statewide (raw or corrected for N observers), for summer in the *Passenger Pigeon* season summary. Spearman rank correlation r = +0.801 for raw, r = +0.777 for corrected, N = 21 and P < 0.001 for both.

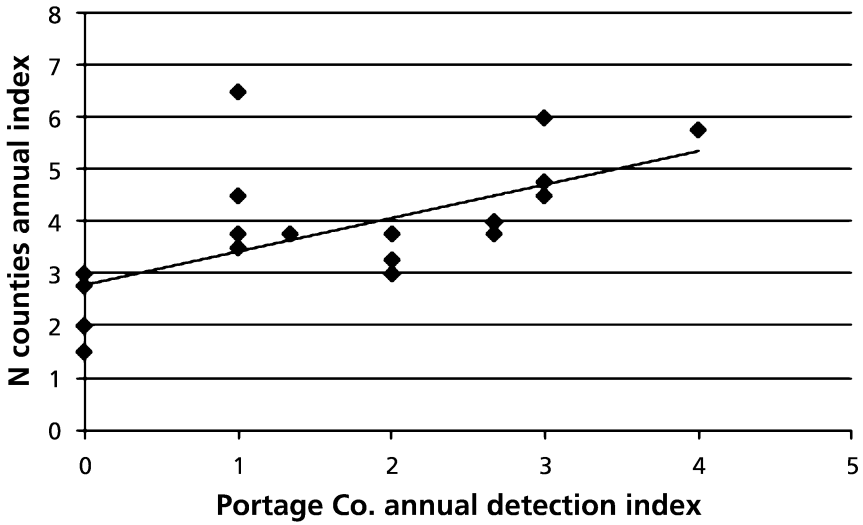

Figure 5. Correlation of the annual index for Portage County SEO presence and Statewide SEO counties annual average (Spearman rank correlation r = +0.693, N = 19 years, P < 0.001).

consin Breeding Bird Surveys on State Natural Areas during 1990–2007 produced no SEO records (Wisconsin DNR 2009).

Annual Checklist indices had weak positive relationships to all SEO measures except nocturnal Swengel surveys, and a strong positive relationship

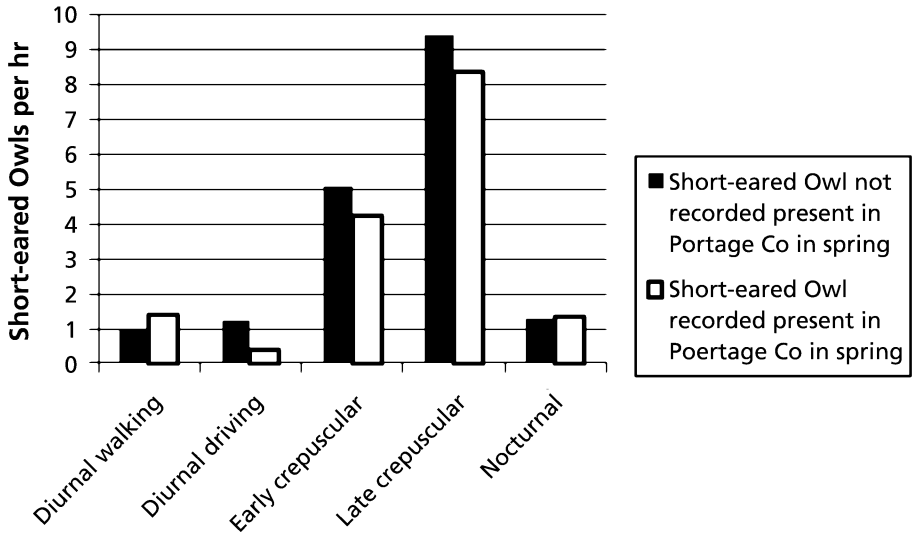

Figure 6. Comparisons of whether Short-eared Owl was reported in Portage County in the *Passenger Pigeon* season summary to abundance indices in the Swengel study, for spring. None were significant and there was no preponderance of positive relationships.

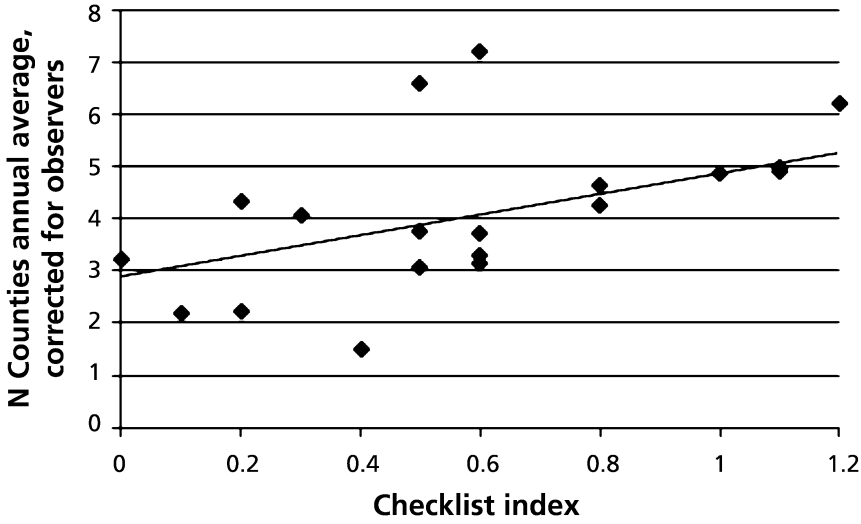

Figure 7. Correlation of annual Checklist Index and annual average for N Counties reporting SEO corrected for N observers (Spearman rank correlation r = +0.598, N = 20, P < 0.01).

with the annual average of SEO corrected counties (Fig. 7). The Checklist Index also covaried significantly with Swengel combined crepuscular driving indices when including all seasons (r = +0.323, N = 43, P < 0.05). CBC SEO indices covaried significantly with winter SEO corrected counties (Table 3). Furthermore, CBC SEO rate per party-hour significantly correlated with the Checklist Index (r = +0.497, N = 21, P < 0.05). This analysis matched indices by the ending year of the CBC period (e.g. winter 1989–90 CBC counted as "1990") to that year's Checklist Index. When matching indices by the starting year of the CBC period to that year's Checklist Index, the correlation was not significant. Besides that, CBC had no significant relationships to other datasets, although most correlations were mildly positive. Annual spring one-day counts showed no tendency (Big Day, North American Migration Count) or a weak tendency (May Day) to correlate with anything else.

Annual indices didn't significantly covary with last year's index but many seasonal indices covaried with last season's index. All Swengel indices and Portage County SEO tests of a seasonal index to its previous season's index were positive, but 75% of SEO County tests had mildly negative correlations. For summer compared to the previous spring, SEO Counties (raw) were nearly significantly positive, and Portage County SEO presence and SEO Corrected Counties were not close to significant but had positive coefficients. Swengel spring crepuscular and composite indices correlated highly with summer—or predicted them to some extent.

Short-eared Owl population trends—

Portage County SEO presence had a significant positive trend over time

Table 3. Pairwise Spearman rank correlations of statewide SEO indices with N SEO Counties indices; probability values given when P < 0.10.

	N Counties (raw)			N Counties (corrected)		
	winter			winter		
% CBCs with SEO	22	+0.355		22	+0.584	<0.01
CBC SEO rate per party-hour	22	+0.251		22	+0.492	<0.05
	annual average			annual average		
Checklist Index	20	+0.330	≤0.10	20	+0.598	<0.01

(Table 4). It was three times as high (68% presence compared to 22%) after the 19 May 2000 WSO bus trip to Buena Vista as before. On that date, 95 birdwatchers saw more than ten SEOs at Buena Vista, possibly increasing future interest in birdwatching here.

The Wisconsin Checklist Index (Rolley 2004, 2011) was the only year-round measure of numerous birdwatchers' effort that was corrected in

Table 4. Short-eared Owl population trend analyses (Spearman rank correlation with year); probability values given when P < 0.10.

	Raw			Corrected for observer effort		
	N	r	P	N	r	P
CBC						
N counts with SEO	22	+0.240		22	+0.127[1]	
Total SEOs	22	+0.164		22	–0.004[2]	
N CBCs	22	+0.965	<0.001			
Party-hours	22	+0.877	<0.001			
Party-hours per CBC	22	+0.584	<0.01			
Wisconsin Checklist Index				21	–0.457	<0.05
May Day	22	–0.534	<0.05	22	–0.474[3]	<0.05
SEO Counties (N counties reporting SEO)						
Summer	21	+0.379	<0.10	21	+0.279	
Winter	22	+0.506	<0.01	22	+0.172	
Annual average	20	+0.320	<0.10	20	–0.009	
Portage County						
Summer detection	21	+0.477	<0.05			
Winter detection	21	+0.534	<0.05			
Annual detection	19	+0.637	<0.01			
Swengel study						
Spring						
Combined crepuscular				11	–0.291	
Summer						
Combined crepuscular				11	–0.349	
Diurnal walking				14	+0.070	
Diurnal driving				14	+0.316	
Composite				11	–0.239	
Annual average						
Composite				11	–0.297	

[1] % of CBCs reporting SEO
[2] SEOs per party-hour
[3] N May Day counts reporting SEO / N May Day counts

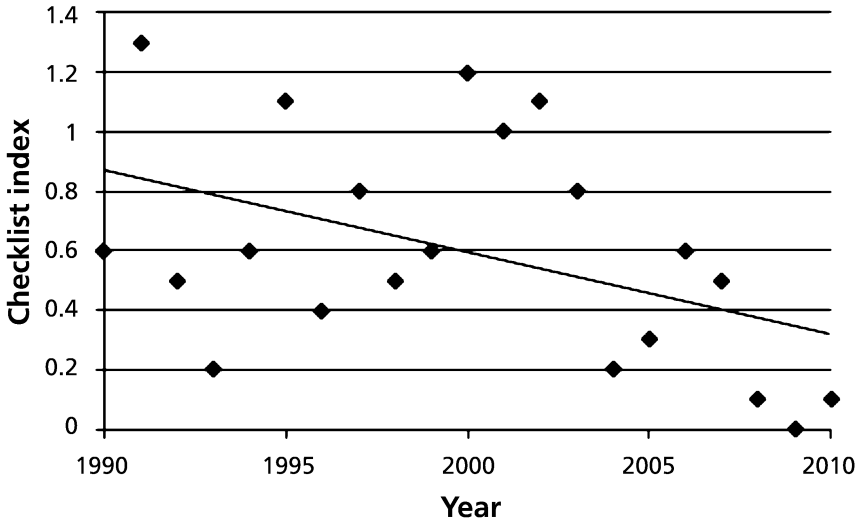

Figure 8. Trend (correlation with year) of the Wisconsin Checklist Index for Short-eared Owls (Spearman rank correlation r = –0.457, N = 21, P < 0.05).

advance for effort (i.e., not by us), and it showed a significant negative 1990–2010 trend for Short-eared Owls (Table 4, Fig. 8). The trend line suggests about a 5% annual decline, but this is not a statistically robust estimate because one very high year could reduce the steepness of this line quite a bit. May Day Counts also showed a significant negative trend in Short-eared Owls found (Table 4).

CBC indices corrected for effort showed no trend over time (Table 4, Fig. 9). SEO corrected Counties showed no trend (Table 4) but the raw (uncorrected) SEO Counties showed a significant increase (Table 4) during 1990–2010.

Swengel surveys exhibited no significant Short-eared Owl population trends in daytime walking and driving 1997–2010 (both slightly positive patterns) or in crepuscular and nocturnal driving surveys 2000–2010 (slightly negative patterns) (Table 4).

Trends for CBC and SEO Counties corrected for effort had a strong tendency to be more negative than the comparable trend for raw numbers (Table 4). For CBC, the number of counts, party-hours, and party-hours per count all strongly increased during the study period (Table 4). N Observers reporting to the WSO Season Summary has also increased strongly (see Methods).

Discussion

Comparisons among datasets—

SEO Counties showed the most positive relationships to owl indices from other programs. But Short-eared Owl presence-absence as reported by bird watchers in Portage County (where Buena Vista is) also indicated Wiscon-

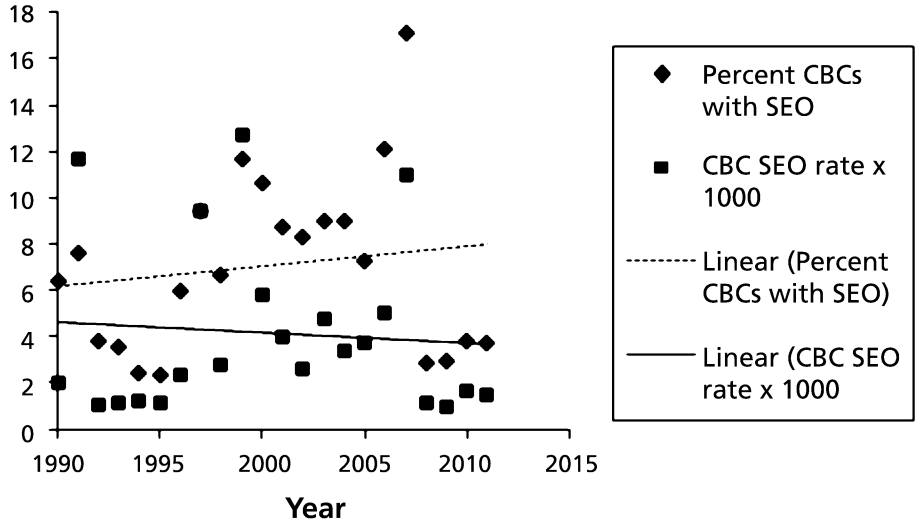

Figure 9. Trend (correlation with year) for CBC Short-eared Owl rate (Spearman rank correlation r = –0.004, N = 22, P > 0.5) and for CBC percent counts reporting SEO with year (Spearman rank correlation r = +0.127, N = 22, P > 0.10).

sin statewide Short-eared Owl abundance. In summer reports to the *Passenger Pigeon*, 5–10 times as many counties reported Short-eared Owls in summer when Portage County also reported Short-eared Owls, compared to summers when Short-eared Owls were not reported in Portage County. In spring, 75% more counties reported Short-eared Owls in years Portage County also reported them as present in the *Passenger Pigeon*. This statistically significant difference was not as strong in spring as for summer for two reasons: Short-eared Owls are reliably present in Portage County every spring—we have found them every spring 1999–2011. As a result, the difference between a Portage County "presence" and "absence" in spring has a strong sampling error effect of how many people were looking or when they looked. Second, the habitat quality threshold to have Short-eared Owls present in spring is much lower than in summer. Short-eared Owls have to pass through many Wisconsin Counties every spring even in years with low summer numbers. But relatively few places are suitable for summer Short-eared Owl breeding, so that there is more differentiation among years by summer abundance. Berner (2011) found that Dewey Marsh in Portage County was also a summer SEO hotspot, and the Buena Vista area is a long-standing Short-eared Owl breeding area (e.g. Beske and Champion 1971, Hamerstrom 1972) that produced three of the eight confirmed nestings statewide for the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas (Evrard 2006).

Buena Vista and Portage County illustrate the hotspot method of quick monitoring. A place that is capable of showing great amplitude in abundance of a species that is difficult to

find is likely to be an indicator of general ups and downs on a larger regional scale. Buena Vista also illustrates the concept that a small percent of the landscape may be inordinately important for a large proportion of a bird's population. For example, Short-eared Owls were found in far more areas of Wisconsin than usual in summer 2000 (Soulen 2000:345) during their large outbreak at Buena Vista. However, for overall regional monitoring, more sites than just a few hotspots need to receive some sampling, because high-quality sites like Buena Vista are likely to take longer to show a decline as average sites. Monitoring just hotspots might therefore exert a positive bias on an assessment of overall patterns.

SEO Counties (especially corrected) and the Portage County presence variable related most strongly to Swengel data, again more strongly in summer than spring. The spring sample size for "absent" in Portage County was too small for statistical power. However, our nocturnal Short-eared Owl indices did not correlate to those of other birdwatcher reporting methods like the season summary, Christmas Bird Count, and the Wisconsin Checklist program, probably because our nocturnal owl drives were atypical birdwatcher behavior. Because the time of day when we had relatively higher SEO indices changed with time of year (Swengel and Swengel 2009), this affects which seasons our indices covary with those in other programs. When we behaved like other birdwatchers and looked for Short-eared Owls using evening or daytime drives, our indices consistently covaried with theirs in summer. The correlation with our indices was also weak when very few Short-eared Owls are seen, such as winter.

Daytime or "typical" birdwatching indices with a large sample had the most agreement, such as correlations among the Swengel dataset (excluding nocturnal surveys), SEO Counties, and Portage County SEO presence. Those large-scale programs that appeared to have less agreement, such as CBC and the Wisconsin Checklist Project, showed correlation to other indices when matched on the same spatial scale (statewide season summary rather than the Swengel study confined to one area) and time scale (matched seasons or matched years). Programs with lower samples such as Big Days, North American Migration Counts, and May Day Counts had little correlation with other programs. This could be due to the narrow time period sampled and relatively low total field hours. It also appears that Short-eared Owl patterns may be more prominent in summer. The difference between a high summer and low summer is so great that summer indices show more statistically significant patterns than other seasons.

Correcting a survey method for effort usually increased the power of correlations with other survey methods that were corrected for effort. This pattern was apparent in correlating CBC and Checklist indices (all corrected for effort) to SEO Counties raw or corrected for N observers (Table 3). Indices uncorrected for increasing observer effort (Portage County SEO presence, SEO Counties raw) tended to agree more with other uncorrected indices than with corrected indices. This is evidenced by the greater difference in uncorrected than corrected counties between

Portage County absence and presence in Figs. 4 and 3. By contrast, Swengel indices (which account for effort) correlated more with corrected SEO Counties than raw (Table 2).

The pattern of some Short-eared Owl measures correlating between one season and the next is not surprising, given that Short-eared Owls go through high periods and low periods. But the pattern of spring surveys at Buena Vista being a strong indicator of that summer's abundance suggests that in bigger Short-eared Owl migration years there, more owls stay to breed. The Short-eared Owl's more conspicuous courtship and other nonnocturnal activity in spring make them more detectable, so that more robust abundance indices can be estimated then than in summer. So long as it is known that breeding occurs at a site, spring indices may more robustly and efficiently indicate the amount of breeding occurring.

Short-eared Owl trends over time—

Long-term trends calculated from uncorrected programs that have increasing effort tended to be neutral or strongly positive, while trends corrected by effort were nearer zero to strongly negative (Table 4). For example, raw CBC totals for Short-eared Owls and N counts reporting SEO in the CBC had more positive trends than corrected CBC SEO indices (Table 4). Of the corrected CBC indices, percent of CBCs with SEO was more positive than CBC SEO rate per party-hour. The former is partially uncorrected because most individual CBCs have increases in party hours over time, making it easier for a CBC to get one SEO even if there aren't more owls. The Wisconsin Checklist Index, which is a corrected measure, showed a pessimistic yet realistic trend of about –5%/yr for Short-eared Owls 1990–2010 that is statistically significant (Table 4). This remarkable program corroborates the longer-term decline of Short-eared Owls in Canada and the United States found in >40 years of the Breeding Bird Survey (Environment Canada 2010, Sauer et al. 2011) and the >70% decline in the last 50 years on National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts both in Wisconsin and North America (National Audubon Society 2012). The Short-eared Owl population trend 1983–present in the Wisconsin Checklist Project is an "inverted U" shape showing an increase in the first part of the Project but a decline later (Rolley 2012). Evidence for this later decline is that analysis of the Checklist Index limited to 1997–2010 (the period of our main Short-eared Owl field study at Buena Vista) shows a far stronger decline in Short-eared Owls ($r = -0.704$, $N = 14$, $P < 0.01$) than for the 1990–2010 period of the Checklist Index (Table 4).

A significant Short-eared Owl decline on May Day counts corroborates the species' declining tendency throughout North America. But the Wisconsin May Day dataset is small enough that caution is needed before we conclude that the trend is negative.

Effects of climate change—

The better (non-negative) Short-eared Owl population trend since 1990 on WSO CBCs than the Checklist Index (this paper) and for continentwide CBCs (National Audubon Society 2012) may be a true pattern

partly caused by recent warm winters. Reference books list most of Wisconsin (Root 1988, Robbins 1991, Holt and Leasure 1993) as outside the usual wintering range of Short-eared Owls. Because 17 out of 21 (81%) of the winters in central Wisconsin during this study had above average temperatures but about average overall snowfall (Young 2010), much more of Wisconsin has become within the Short-eared Owl's winter tolerances. Compared to 1895–1989 temperatures, winters averaged 3°F warmer during this study (calculated by us from Young 2010). This warming trend also affects bird phenology in Wisconsin, causing migratory birds to spend a higher percentage of the cool season here (e.g. Jones et al. 2012). During the relatively cool winters of 1983–86 the Wisconsin Checklist Project recorded a very low index for Short-eareds in midwinter (Temple and Cary 1987:145, combining northern and southern Wisconsin graphs), but after the Project added 10 more years of data the December-January indices for Short-eared Owls had become higher than most months of the year (Temple et al. 1997:147). Warmer spring through fall weather, however, would not be expected to boost Short-eared Owl numbers here because Wisconsin is in the southern part of its breeding range. Therefore, a warming climate may only increase Short-eared Owl numbers in the winter part of the annual Checklist Project cycle.

Conclusion—

Large programs using many birdwatcher-days like the *Passenger Pigeon* season summary, the Christmas Bird Count, and the Wisconsin Checklist Project produced numerous logical patterns as compared to one another and over time. It is fortunate that these birdwatcher programs and our surveys at Buena Vista produced enough Short-eared Owl records to provide meaningful patterns and trends because most standardized warm-season bird surveys (even focused on grasslands) produce minuscule indices of Short-eared Owls (Swengel and Swengel 2009: Table 11 summarizing 12 studies by 10 teams in 13 states and provinces; Wisconsin DNR 2009). Birdwatcher programs with smaller amounts of sampling showed fewer Short-eared Owl patterns. Most of the larger programs exhibited some concordance with our intensive searches at Buena Vista 1997–2010. Our nocturnal driving owl indices showed little concordance with other programs, but these drives are atypical birdwatcher behavior and appear limited in usefulness to little used dirt roads bisecting large unfenced grassland (Swengel and Swengel 2009). Birdwatcher counts acquired during the fun spring searches for Short-eared Owls are a strong indicator for how summer numbers will go at Buena Vista (a hotspot site) and statewide.

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Scott R. Swengel and Ann B. Swengel enjoy studying birds and butterflies together. They are especially interested in owls, grassland birds, and butterflies of prairies, barrens, and sphagnum bogs. Their numerous publications focus on survey techniques, long-term population monitoring, and conservation management. Ann is on the editorial board of the Journal of Insect Conservation.

Pectoral Sandpiper found by David Lund.

Birds Reports, Going with the Flow

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As rapid as the gray-green flash of a Merlin's underwing, changes can come. Or, we may absorb them slowly as the eclipse plumage of a drake Northern Shoveler giving way to autumn brilliance.

At any speed changes move us forward. And, the WSO's acting to update the Rare Bird Documentation Form, add a new Review Species List, and automate the reporting process is definitely moving Wisconsin birding forward. Driving these improvements is the continuing increase of bird reports that birders of all levels bring to the attention of the birding community through many avenues. The goal of this article is to show the flow of those records once they are "public" and report changes birders should be aware of in the WSO reporting process. I direct readers to the official Wisconsin Society for Ornithology website as it contains much of the information cited in this writing: http://wsobirds.org/.

Starting with one well-publicized big change is that there is no longer a Short Form bird list. For eBirders most former "Short Form" bird reports are flagged and generate a request for confirmation along with supporting details. For non-eBirders awareness of a species' status as unusual, requiring additional details to support the report, is wise. Observers need to consult the "Report Sightings" tab on the WSO Website for Review Species list and early/late records.

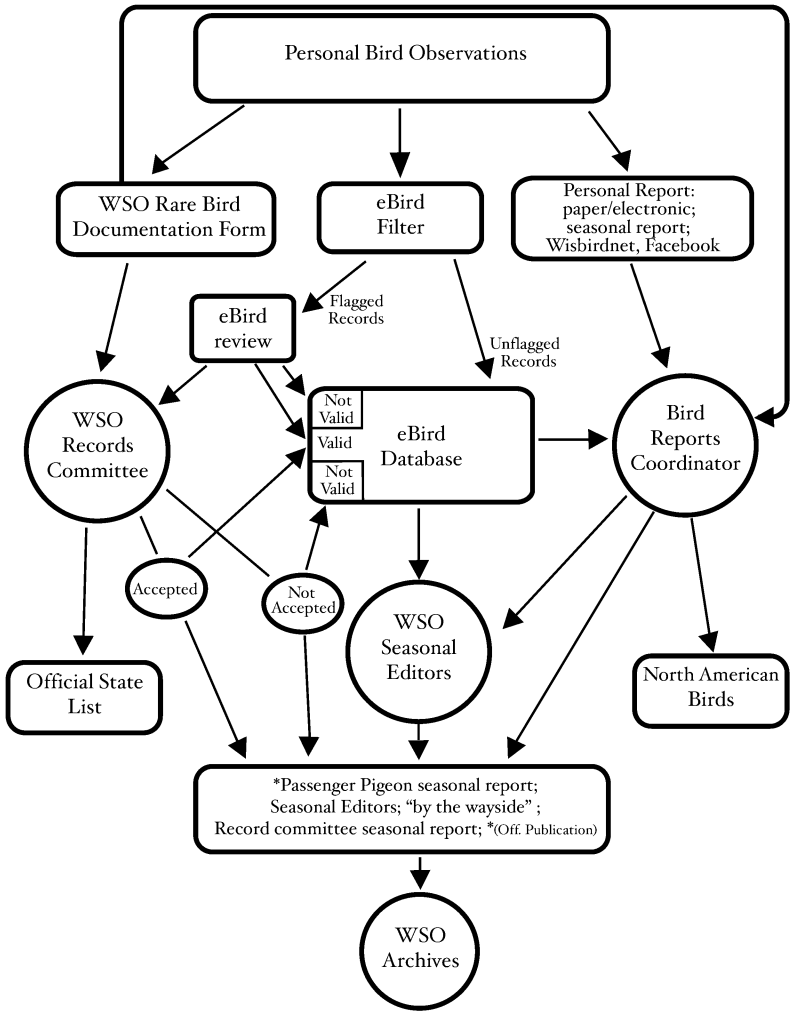
There has also been an updating of the Single County Report Species List found on the WSO site both in electronic and printable form. Correction of a glitch which caused reports to be truncated in the Single County Report Form has also been resolved. Though still available on the WSO website, there will not be a comparable update of the old printable Multi-County Form. Its further use is left up to the reporter's discretion and eBird is encouraged as its replacement.

The Long Form too has been discontinued and its function has been primarily replaced by the Rare Bird Documentation Form for all species appearing on the Review Bird List. It is required that any report of a Review Species, or species record or near-record early/late date, be on a Rare Bird Documentation Form, accessible via the WSO website. Completion of a Rare Bird Documentation Form automatically generates email copies to

three parties: one to the reporter; one to the Records Committee Chair (RC)—Ryan Brady; and one to the Birds Report Coordinator (BRC)—me, Joe Schaufenbuel.

The WSO functions for many bird-related reasons, not the least of these is the evaluation, publication, and archiving of bird reports. To illustrate record treatment and movement through the WSO reporting system, there is below a Flowchart graphing the components of this process. First presented in a brief talk at the Madison WSO convention, this Flowchart will be consulted frequently.

FLOWCHART



Arrows indicate actual movement of observation reports to and from the differing WSO bodies (boxes and circles). After evaluation by each WSO body of a record, along with all supporting documentation and images, it moves to the next appropriate WSO body. The shapes of the boxes are not significant and only there to add a little eye-appeal to the chart.

Personal Observations Box—*what you observe*

To start the Flowchart the top box is Personal Observations. These are your observations that may, or may not, move on to the attention of the WSO BCR, Seasonal Field Note Compilers, and Records Committee.

Bird observers using eBird have much of the reporting work done for them as many birders are aware. For ease, completeness, access, and organization eBird compiles your bird reports and flags records needing additional details or Rare Bird Documentation Form. Today, eBird submissions account for over 95% of all bird reports and are the recommended reporting system. But there are active birders not using eBird and there are less active birders whose records come to attention through other routes.

And those routes, including eBird, are: eBird; Rare Bird Documentation; Wisconsin Birding Network; Facebook; Single County Form; Multi-County Form (Paper Only); May Day Reports; Big Day Reports; Christmas Bird Counts; Specimens; and, All Others.

Hereafter, I will follow each observation input type through to deposition in Archives.

eBird Box/eBird Database Boxes—

Personal observations arriving as ebird submissions follow the arrow to the eBird Box. Here observations pass directly into the eBird Database Box (i.e. "unflagged" common species, expected numbers, and such) or are flagged by preset filters prompting confirmation and details for birds historically rare, seasonally late/early, or found in exceptional numbers. Flagged reports move along the arrow to the eBird Review Box. Questions about eBird here may be directed to the Wisconsin eBird Team: wiebird@gmail.com.

eBird ReviewBox—

Regional reviewers—the Wisconsin eBird Team—manage the flagged bird reports. If the observation is of a WSO Review List species, a record early/late date, or a species never officially recorded before in Wisconsin, the team will respond. The eBird team prompts the observer to report the observation to the WSO via the Rare Bird Documentation Form and defers acceptance, or not, to the WSO Records Committee.

Reports that do not reach the higher rarity level noted above may still be flagged, as being regionally rare (within a particular Wisconsin eBird zone), or somewhat late, or otherwise unusual, and are assessed by the eBird team. Details provided by the observer may be enough to confirm the identification. Otherwise, the team may request additional details from the observer to support a report. Flagged records accepted by the eBird team go into the eBird database in perpetuity. Records not approved are catalogued in the database for future access and are maintained in the observer's personal eBird lists/records; but, these are not displayed in any eBird output or analysis. Data eBird stores are dynamically archived in the Avian Knowledge Network maintained at Cornell University.

Unaccepted records are important to track as they may offer valuable information later. Records from eBird are compiled and made available sea-

sonally to the BRC and The Passenger Pigeon Seasonal Editors (also known as Field Note Compilers).

Rare Bird Documentation Box—

The main function of the Records Committee (RC) is to assess seasonally the validity of rare bird records submitted via the rare Bird Documentation Form. It is incumbent upon the observer to submit Rare Bird documentation for Review List Species and record early/late departures. Comments submitted to eBird, to list serves, or other media DO NOT qualify as documentation for WSO in these instances.

Completion of a Rare Bird Documentation automatically generates email copies to three parties: one to the reporter; one to the RC Chair; and one to the BRC. Records Committee voting follows a protocol outlined in the WSO Official Bylaws.

Accepted records serve as the benchmark for the official Checklist of the Birds of Wisconsin. Both accepted and not accepted records are published in the Passenger Pigeon and these decisions are in turn used to validate (or not) those flagged records awaiting final determination in the eBird database. Questions about the Rare Bird Documentation Form or Records Committee may be directed to Ryan Brady at ryanbrady10@hotmail.com.

Personal Report Box—

Aside from the massive eBird data and the Review Bird List observations directed to the RC, there is a small portion of reports that come to the attention of the BRC via the Wisconsin Bird Network, Single and Multi-County Forms, and all other electronic or paper routes as listed above.

Bird Reports Coordinator Circle—

The BRC's function is to glean and accumulate observations of interest from sources mentioned above. The BRC then filters that information and passes it to the Seasonal Editors, RC, and compiles the most interesting observations in a report to the Great Lakes Regional editor for the publication North American Birds (NAB).

As noted, the BRC may find it worthwhile to pursue interesting reports. I may request additional information, or even the completion of a Rare Bird Documentation, to support an unusual observation that may need follow-up to avoid being lost. Arrows indicating the flow of records coming from Personal Reports, Rare Bird Documentation Forms, and eBird Archives are used in compiling the North American Birds report then passed along to the Passenger Pigeon Seasonal Editors. Since the RC does not have time to rule on rare birds records prior to my writing the NAB report, I use my discretion to include, or not include, a reported occurrence. Unaccepted reports (that are too scant, unsupported, or that appear in error) are frequently culled and not forwarded to any other WSO body. Questions about bird reports, NAB, and function of the BRC may be directed to Joe Schaufenbuel at schaufenbuel@charter.net.

WSO Seasonal Report Circle and Passenger Pigeon Box—

Moving from the RC after its rulings, eBird compilations and reports collected by the BRC provide a mas-

sive amount of seasonal information, much of it collated and reported on by the Seasonal Editors. The four seasonal reports are major undertakings and appear in the Passenger Pigeon, the official publication of all records. The RC also publishes reports on its voting in the Passenger Pigeon. Observer notes ("By the Wayside") and articles concerning the finding, identification, and related bird report information are also summarized in the Passenger Pigeon.

Archives Circle—

Every report, documentation, and image (though not specimens) is delivered to and archived in a room exclusively for use of the WSO at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. The only information that is not archived at UW-GB is that submitted to eBird (which is electronically archived via AKN at Cornell) and not otherwise used in any published report.

It is hoped that this article provides enlightenment on what happens to bird reports after they move into the WSO record system.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank Ryan Brady and Nick Anich for their review of and suggestions for this article.

Joe Schaufenbuel serves as the WSO Bird Reports Coordinator. His duties are partially defined above in the paragraph on Bird Reports Coordinator Circle. He is a member of the WSO Board of Directors.

Young American Robin by Bob Larson.

Five Homemade Experiments

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Birds Across Eau Claire (2012)

You've heard the expression, of course, killing two birds with one stone. I don't care much for that axiom. I prefer my birds alive and healthy, whenever possible. Though I do believe in efficiency, and multitasking. That's how I began surveying birds on my way to work.

For reasons of personal fitness I have been biking to work whenever possible. It's almost exactly five miles from my home in Eau Claire's Third Ward to WQOW-TV, where I work just out past where I-94 crosses Highway 93, and on days when the wind is below fifty miles an hour and the heat index is below 110 degrees, I usually head up to the TV station around 7:30 AM. The ride—which takes me about twenty-five minutes—starts off as a leisurely pleasure cruise through the shade trees along Farwell and Roosevelt Streets and then mutates into a lung-searing climb up State Street. I'm winded from Fire Station #5 until I cross the interstate, but it's a wonderful cardiovascular workout AND an opportunity for a spot of citizen science.

I realized years ago that the bike ride to work is in effect a cross-section sampling of the city of Eau Claire, from down in the Chippewa River floodplain all the way out to where the houses thin and a few brave remnants of field and forest persist. So, from the moment I exit my door, I begin counting birds.

Through the third of August I have managed to undertake 21 counts along the route. I have in fact biked to work more often than that, but sometimes later in the day when the birds are less active, so I only included the earlier morning rides in the study, and only on the way to work, not back home.

From March—when the weather mellowed surprisingly—until now, I have logged a total of 64 different bird species from my bike along the way, some of them eye-balled (though without the help of binoculars) though most of them were identified by sound alone.

With the nifty assistance of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology eBird program I have logged the data online. Ebird (www.ebird.org) not only preserves the data, but allows anyone else who is interested to view the results as well. And, with a few keystrokes, I can crunch the numbers too.

For example . . .

So far I've tallied 2285 individual birds on the way to work.

The most commonly encountered bird is (no surprises here) the American Robin—365 of them—which rose to an average of 24 along the route in May, before dropping to a low of 6.5 birds per trip in July.

The second most common bird encountered was the Northern Cardinal at 231 birds. They averaged highest in March and they too slipped steadily as the summer wore on.

The third most common bird was the Red-winged Blackbird at 194 individuals—but while the majority of robins and cardinals was found in the yards of the Third Ward and Putnam Heights, all of the blackbirds were counted beyond the halfway point—from the Fairfax Prairie all the way to I-94.

Rounding out the top ten were House Sparrow, Black-capped Chickadee, American Crow, Chipping Sparrow, European Starling, House Wren, and House Finch.

From mid-April until the song activity dropped off in the last week of July, ten species were accounted for on each and every ride to work; crow, chickadee, robin, starling, Song Sparrow, cardinal, blackbird, House Finch, American Goldfinch, and House Sparrow.

I hit a high of 32 species counted on 22 May, and a low of sixteen on 1 August.

The most unusual bird? I'd say it's a tossup between a set of birds I encountered only once each; Wild Turkey, Osprey, Red-shouldered Hawk, and Blue-headed Vireo. Oddly, I counted only 2 Baltimore Orioles the entire spring and summer, and only one Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

And a colony of Bank Swallows that held up the development of the new Mega Foods South property gets special recognition as a fascinating side study. I counted 89 of them, by the way. Thanks, you guys, for waiting on the bulldozers!

I love my job—I really do! But heading off to work first thing in the morning used to be kind of a bummer—until I started counting cardinals and ticking off titmice.

Now? I'm digging the live birds and keeping fit. How's that for getting things done?

My Big Green Birding Day (2011)

There are some things I've never tried and probably never will. Skydiving. Running with the bulls. Poison blowfish on a cracker. After that, I suppose the rest is fair game.

For example, there's a new take on birding that combines the best of the sport with the gentlest of ethics. It's called a BGBY —acronym for "big green birding year"—and this is how it works; you get to count any species of birds identified on foot, by bike, or by mass transit. The point is to bird more conscientiously, take advantage of habitat close to home, and use fewer petroleum resources.

So I thought I'd give it a go, but with a personal twist. My objective? To get 100 species in Eau Claire County by bike.

3:05 AM—I slipped the bike out of the garage and headed north on Far-

well Street. Beneath a sky clear as cardinal song, through jacket-friendly temperatures, I charged the Gray Street Hill and wound my way into and through Altoona. When I cleared town, the adventure really kicked into gear.

3:25 AM—I encountered the first bird of the day, a calling Eastern Whip-poor-will, along Highway KB, just as the first trace of dawn bled into the east northeast and the last crescent of the moon cleared the trees. I counted twenty-seven Whip-poor-wills in the next hour following Highways SS and K to Beaver Creek Reserve—a high day count total for all of the state of Wisconsin in 2011.

4:15 AM—Now, with light enough to see the ground without a flashlight, I gratefully dismounted and walked the trails of Beaver Creek where Eastern Phoebe, Scarlet Tanager, and Barred Owls were already awake and active. But my destination for the day was twenty-five miles farther down the country road. If I wanted to be there early enough to catch the morning bird activity, I needed to keep pedalling.

Rolling along the beautiful countryside of Highways D and N, I could see my breath in the humid dawn. I felt like a kid again, liberated by the freedom that only a bike can provide. I'd twice completed what bikers call "century rides."—when I was in my twenties. In your fifties you can either give up adventures altogether, or jump on the bike and go for it. The piper will just have to keep up.

5:30 AM—The birds were coming at me so fast I had to stop every half mile to jot them down. By the end of the day I'd have encountered totals like these: 107 Red-winged Blackbirds, thirteen Scarlet Tanagers, and forty-seven Indigo Buntings.

6:30 AM—The traffic heading south on Highway 27 was light, but feeling nervous about semis and boat trailers, I cut left on GG and pedalled until the air smelled of Sweet Fern.

7 AM—When I reached the Augusta Wildlife Area I was the only human present, the trees closing overhead as I wound in along the gravel road. When it opened to marsh I was greeted by Swamp Sparrows, both Sedge and Marsh Wrens, several waterfowl species and the bowl of the sky turned upside down.

9 AM—Coon Forks County Park—where the campsites are well-spaced and immaculately-groomed—was my farthest point from home. I worked the area over for birds and found a picnic table in the shade to enjoy "lunch" and finally tally a species total. Ninety-one species. Only nine more for my goal, but whoa! I'd be returning home in the hottest/least birdy time of the day. Could I pull it off?

I composed a list of all the species still reasonably possible and came up with twenty-seven, including: Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Chimney Swift, American Kestrel, Northern Harrier, Broad-winged Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Western Meadowlark, Downy Woodpecker, Dickcissel, Bald Eagle, Bank Swallow, Orchard Oriole, Spotted Sandpiper, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Ring-necked Pheasant, Cooper's Hawk, Purple Martin, Ring-billed Gull . . . or, the ace-in-the-hole Osprey at Carson Park. What were the odds?

11 AM—Exiting the park, I spotted two dark soaring shapes above the barrens. Turkey Vultures, 92. Chimney Swift in downtown Augusta, 93. With

the coolest part of the day behind me, I braced for impact. On a Wisconsin summer day, the wind is typically out of the west or south. Luckily, I was facing a stiff southwesterly blow, so I got a nice push anytime I pointed the bike north.

I deserted Highway 12 for Highway JJ where I flushed a trusty Western Meadowlark, found a calling Downy Woodpecker, and a pair of nesting Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers in a shady woods along Highway J, finally located a singing Dickcissel in a weedy cow pasture, and a lone Red-tailed Hawk hugging the treeline. "Hey," I thought . . . "I might just pull this off."

1:30 PM—The interstate within view, I caught the husky strains of an Orchard Oriole coming from a yard up ahead. It sang twice more as I passed. I was at 99 for the day, which meant that 100 was now a lead pipe cinch. If I couldn't find one last bird before town I'd have to make a run at the ace-in-the-hole Osprey.

Passing beneath I-94 I was surprised to encounter singing Eastern Wood-Pewees, American Redstart, and Mourning Warbler along Otter Creek. Highway 53 has less traffic and kinder grades than Highway 12 west of Fall Creek, and with the wind at my back I fairly sailed along, scanning left and right for that lucky Kestrel or the crow of a Ring-necked Pheasant. Not far from the State Patrol headquarters I spied tell-tale habitat—a large dirt pile with sculpted sides and a grassy top off to the west in a new neighborhood development. Yeah, you know what that means . . .

I wheeled in past the workers and pulled up as close as I could get to confirm the shapes darting in and out of the nest holes high on the side of the pile, just below the grassy lid. But I already knew what they were; small brown swallows with neck collars. Bank Swallows. Ka-ching.

2:25 PM—Eleven and one-half hours and 77 miles from start to finish—the most I'd bicycled in a day in thirty-five years. More than twelve-hundred individual birds counted. My first ever Eau Claire only 100 species day, and my first 100 bird BGBY year. An unforgettable way to spend a beautiful summer day, a novel way to get know my county better, and not a drop of gasoline spent. The costs?

Hmmm. As far as I know they don't sell exercise or perspiration by the gallon.

Cheek the Chickadee (2009)

My family and I were introduced to Cheek the Chickadee in early December of 2008. We had aluminum awnings that shielded the top of half our home's windows, and Cheek flew up into the one off the dining room, fluffed up its feathers, and spent the sub-zero night. From then on, we became bunk mates.

The tiny bird's full name is Chico, but we shortened that to Cheek in pointed reference to its cocky attitude. And it doesn't come to stay every night—only when it snows. The day after I discovered Cheek roosting there, I cut a branch of fir leftover from our solstice tree and secured it to the inside of the awning. I imagined it might offer a bit of extra windbreak.

It's hard to figure why the bird picked our awning as a bivouac. Not eight feet to the west is a thick (though low) yew bush layered with

snow. There's a spruce tree a few yards in the other direction. And on that spruce tree is a nest box with a vacancy light flashing. What could possibly induce a bird to choose a frosty metal awning six feet from my dinner table as its cover during the long winter evenings?

Birds have developed many strategies for dealing with severe cold. When Cheek beds down, it preens for a bit, then methodically fluffs its body feathers until it looks like a tribble with a tail.

Most birds' feet are unfeathered, of course, and seem very vulnerable to heat loss and even frostbite, but a bird's toes are mainly bone and sinew, not muscle, and are not as susceptible to "freezer burn." And when a bird hunkers down to rest the toes are enveloped in insulation.

Here's another one of those amazing bird adaptations. The arteries and veins in a bird's feet are arranged so that they lie side-by-side. The warm arterial blood transfers heat directly to the cooled venous blood, which pumps right back into the bird's body, thus reducing heat loss through the toes, even when in contact with an ice-cold metal awning.

In mid-December, when the nightly temps dipped as low as minus 12, Cheek spent six straight evenings with us, usually checking in an hour or less before sunset, and busting out before sunrise.

When Cheek didn't show up for the next three nights my wife grabbed me by the collar. "You made me love him, now he's dead," she lamented.

Whoa, Dear! First of all, chickadees are monomorphic, meaning males and females appear identical to the human eye, so there's no telling yet whether Cheek is a he or a she. Second, I must point out both as a nod to scientific reasoning and an effort to calm my bride, that Cheek probably just found another place to crash for the night—in all likelihood someplace closer to its as-of-yet-unidentified daytime stash of black sunflower seed and suet.

Third, I didn't make nobody do nothin'.

And fourth, Cheek reappeared the very next dusk. At 3:38 PM it flew up into the awning, put its beak to the aluminum, and transformed itself into a feathered fuzzball.

In a study done in the 1940s, a scientist discovered that House Sparrows could only survive for 15 hours without food when the temperature reached 5 degrees above zero. At minus thirty, the birds only lasted seven hours.

The only time I actually had the chance to see Cheek enter the awning at dusk and depart the next morning was the night of 28 December. It scolded me from a rhododendron before claiming the south corner of the awning at 3:55 PM. At 7:25 AM, I watched it rouse, rattle its feathers, and rocket out of the awning, for a total of exactly 15 and one half hours confined in the "aluminum roost." That means the bulk of each day surviving night, and only eight and-a-half short hours left to pack its quarter-of-an-ounce frame with food.

I'm going to stop just short of saying that birds can predict weather, but it seems that Cheek prefers the shelter of my awning on cloudy or snowy days. Perhaps, being a Black-capped Chickadee, it doesn't like crystallized precip accumulating on its crown and back. Even on the occasions when Cheek

chose the awning on otherwise sunny days, it would later snow during the night. Uncanny, huh? Get me the Weather Channel!

We Love What We Know (2007)

I got to wondering one day . . . "How many wild birds could the average person name from memory?" Probably not many, right? But how many? My guess? Most Americans don't pay much attention to birds, and probably never even heard of the vast majority of the wild birds that live around them, so they would have a tough time listing birds by memory. I hypothesized that the average American could name fewer than one dozen birds from memory.

And I'm being pretty picky here. I mean actual specific names—not "duck" or "hawk." "Turkey" would count, because there's only one wild turkey. Same with "robin" I suppose, and "cardinal." But definitely not "bluebird," "crow," "loon," or "oriole." For the bird to count, one would have to—in every case—differentiate it from all other American bird species—for example, "Bald Eagle," "American Crow," or "Mallard."

This is how the actual experiment would work: Each volunteer subject would be asked to compose two lists from memory; the first a list of "familiar" things chosen from one of four categories—U.S. cities, sports teams, musical acts, or movie stars. The second list would be names of wild birds.

Answers would only count if clearly unique. For cities, subjects would be required to name city AND state. "Madison" would not count, but "Madison, Wisconsin" would. For movie stars, first AND last names were required—"George Clooney", but not simply "Clooney." For sports teams, both the city and the team name were needed. "Chicago Bears" would be countable, while either "Chicago" or "Bears" would not. Each subject would get one minute to list as many "familiar" names as they could think of, and then (after a short breather) a second minute to list as many specific birds as they could.

Each subject was tested privately, in a quiet setting without interruption. I would give them the signal to begin, start the stopwatch, then silently tick off the countable responses as they were made without either encouraging or discouraging the subject.

Since this would be a "random" sampling, I would not be inviting birders to participate in the study. Just to see what would happen if a birder participated I tried the test myself, with my wife keeping tally. In sixty seconds I ticked off 57 specific bird names (but only because I "verbally stumbled" while pronouncing three).

For volunteer subjects I started out by recruiting family and friends, and then expanded the experiment into my neighborhood and workplace. I ended up with twenty-five subjects included in the study.

By far the most popular choice of "familiar" lists was U.S. Cities. Sports teams were next, but only with men. Three people chose movie stars, and two people chose musical acts. Most displayed no indication of nervousness when asked to list the "familiar" names. Every one of the subjects displayed some level of anxiety or trepidation when asked to list bird names.

The results?

The highest tally recorded was 37

sports teams. The second highest was a tie—33 sports teams and 33 U.S cities in one minute. The lowest tally was thirteen sports teams. The average for "familiar" lists was 24.04 countable names in sixty seconds.

The highest tally for specific bird names listed in sixty seconds was 17. Two people managed 16. The lowest tally was one bird listed in the allowed minute—accomplished by three separate subjects (robin, cardinal, and turkey). And the average for wild birds listed in a minute? 7.08.

What this means is that Americans—at least as surveyed in this very limited sampling—can name four times more movie stars or musical acts than wild birds. But that isn't surprising. We know what we know. The list of "familiars" could probably be expanded to automobile models, TV shows, or clothes fashion lines.

Of course, the flip side is that "you can't love what you don't know." That familiarity makes the heart grow fonder, and ignorance goes hand-in-hand with apathy. When we are familiar with birds, we look out for birds. Knowledge is a head start on conservation.

How can we expect our fellow Americans to care about birds when they have no idea who they are? That's not so much to ask is it? That we get to know our birds better? It's easy, it's fun, and it's educational. And it only takes a minute of your time.

Count Me In (2004)

If you like to look at birds, you're in good company. It seems that more Americans spend more time birdwatching than ever before.

According to a federal economic report recently conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, there are 46 million birdwatchers in this country. That's one out of every five Americans. In fact, Wisconsin ranks in the top three states for birding participation as a percent of total state population.

To be considered a birdwatcher for the purposes of the report, "an individual must take a trip a mile or more from home for the primary purpose of observing birds or must closely observe or try to identify birds around the home." Understandably, those who oggle birds from a window or porch are the most common example of participant. Those who observed birds casually while involved in other recreational activities—like mowing the lawn or swimming at a beach—were not counted toward the federal total.

In order to put this to personal application, I conducted a study of my own in 2003. I decided to keep track of if, how, and when I birded for each day of the entire year. The results, freshly tabulated, paint a portrait of participation that is very representative of how and why the sport is so widely enjoyed.

I measured somewhat differently than the USFWS, however. Unlike them, I did count any casual encounter of a bird—by sight or sound—as birdwatching. I also differentiated between those chance encounters and more serious outings during which I spent at least one hour looking actively for birds.

The first thing that I must relate is that, no, I did not birdwatch every day of 2003. Out of the total 365 days I whiffed on 25. For whatever reasons—

blizzards, illness, a gripping novel—I registered almost a month of my year bird-free. Most of those misses occurred in January, December, and February when birds are sometimes scarce and predictably quiet. Many other winter days tallied only a crow or two flying over as I drove to work, or a chickadee chastising me while I retrieved the newspaper.

At the beginning of the year I predicted that I would limit my days spent in serious pursuit of birds to fewer than fifty. I wasn't half close. Only twenty-one times did I commit more than one hour of a day to birdwatching, and most of those efforts distilled down to discrete trips in and out of state, particularly in April, May, June and August, months when birds are most active and most obvious.

Not only was much of my birdwatching casual in nature, but it most often transpired during the work week. Criss-crossing Wisconsin and the midwest with a video camera allowed me ample opportunity to locate birds—many of them from a car, or boat. Statistically-speaking, 39% of my year's birdwatching took place while busy at making a living. I applied binocular to bird 64 different days in 2003, but not once in July—though I did put my ears to use even then. As I do not regularly feed birds at my home, it is probable that, in terms of frequency, I am a below average birder. By the USFWS standard I birdwatched less than six percent of the total days of the year; certainly less actively than the diligent feeder-stocker.

But there's more to the story than just number-crunching. What it says about birdwatching is that the sport is accessible and flexible. One does not need to sacrifice prohibitive amounts of time to see or enjoy birds, nor does one have to feed birds, or even go looking for them. There are no books or fees required. Binoculars too, are strictly optional.

All that is needed is a measure of curiosity and a receptivity to color and sound. To participate, one need only open one's eyes and ears to what goes on daily around us. Birdwatching is catchy as a common cold. But if by chance you come down with a "bad" case of the birds, count yourself as one of the fortunate.

Steve Betchkal is an Emmy-nominated TV journalist and author of ***All of This & Robins Too: A Guide to the 50 or So Best Places to Find Birds in Wisconsin****, and* ***Make Birds Not War****. His next 2 books are due out in 2013 and 2014. He has written almost 200 articles for the Eau Claire Leader-Telegram and Birdwatching Magazine; he is currently Photo Editor for the WSO website, and busy producing the WSO's Bird TV—a series of educational videos on Wisconsin birds. His website is www.manymorebirds.webs.com.*

50 Years Ago in *The Passenger Pigeon*

Planning is well underway for the 2013 WSO annual meeting in Ashland, and this issue contains a detailed account of the 1963 Convention in Chippewa Falls attended by **280** members, guests, and friends of the WSO. Among the papers were a presentation by Howie Young on Breeding Success of the Cowbird; The Evening Grosbeak Invasion: Winter 1961-62; The Visitometer, a Simplified Mechanical Counter; The Bald Eagle in Wisconsin by Alexander Sprunt IV; Hawk Owls Invade Douglas County; and color motion pictures narrated by Fran Hamerstron on Trapping and Banding Harriers on the Buena Vista Marsh.

The afternoon session moderated by Joe Hickey was a symposium on Pesticide Use in Wisconsin, and included a program on Recent Studies in Wisconsin on Dutch Elm Control and Bird Populations that showed extremely high bird mortality where DDT was used. The **224** who attended the usual Saturday evening banquet were charmed by Harold Mayfield's program on the Kirtland's Warbler.

Excerpt from Vol. 25(1), 1963 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.

Steve Fisher captured this Osprey as it was just ready for flight.

Wisconsin May Day Counts—2012

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With Kim Kreitinger moving on to assume other responsibilities within the WSO, I would like to express thanks for her time summarizing these May Day Counts.

This spring's unseasonably warm weather likely had something to do with the substantial increase in the number of May Day Counts conducted. The 12 counts (Table 1) were the most since the 2005. A total of 84 birders participated in counting a total of 31,359 individuals of 233 species (Table 2). Winnebago and Milwaukee/Ozaukee led the way with 21 participants each, followed by Waupaca with eleven. The 233 species tallied in this year's count is right in line with the 5-year mean, but it is still well below the 24-year average of 241.

Once again it was Winnebago on top with its 174 species. Close behind were Milwaukee/Ozaukee with 167 and Fond du Lac with 160. Winnebago tallied the most shorebirds (19) and herons/bitterns (8). Milwaukee/Ozaukee registered the highest number of flycatchers (10), thrushes (6), warblers (29), and they shared the sparrow (12) lead with Waukesha and the vireo (4) lead with Waupaca. Waupaca also led in woodpeckers (7). The Fond du Lac crew found the most waterfowl (15).

Table 1. The 2012 Wisconsin May Day Counts

Count	Date	Time	Sky	Wind	Temp.	Obs.	Species
Winnebago #1	5/19	4:00–20:30	Clear	S 9–29	55–88	21	174
Milwaukee/Ozaukee	5/19	—	Clear	SW 5–20	59–86	21	167
Fond Du Lac	5/19	1:30–17:30	P. Cloudy	SE 11–15	48–86	8	160
Waukesha	5/05	—	—	—	—	—	147
Waupaca	5/17	5:00–23:00	Cloudy	Light	44–64	11	142
Burnett	5/21	4:10–22:00	Clear	Light	34–74	4	131
Oneida	5/19	12:00–21:20	—	—	—	3	129
Marathon	5/06	3:00–19:00	Light rain	Light	45–52	6	125
Florence	5/30	4:00–19:30	—	—	—	5	115
Portage/Waupaca	5/08	5:00–19:00	Cloudy	—	—	1	81
Winnebago #2	5/22	8:00–16:30	Sunny	Breezy	88	3	80
Ozaukee	5/09	9:00–14:00	—	—	—	1	43

Table 2. Species observed on the 2012 Wisconsin May Day Counts.

Species	Winnebago #1	Milwaukee/ Ozaukee	Fond du Lac	Waukesha	Waupaca	Burnett	Oneida	Marathon	Florence	Portage/ Waupaca	Winnebago #2	Ozaukee
Canada Goose	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Mute Swan		X	X	X	X							
Trumpeter Swan			X	X		X						
Wood Duck	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Gadwall	X	X	X			X		X				
American Wigeon	X		X									
American Black Duck					X		X					
Mallard	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Blue-winged Teal	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
Northern Shoveler	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X		
Northern Pintail			X									
Green-winged Teal	X		X	X		X	X	X				
Canvasback	X											
Redhead	X		X			X		X				
Ring-necked Duck				X		X	X	X				
Greater Scaup					X							
Lesser Scaup	X	X	X	X				X	X			
Surf Scoter		X										
White-winged Scoter		X										
Bufflehead								X				
Common Goldeneye					X		X					
Hooded Merganser	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Common Merganser								X				
Red-breasted Merganser		X										X
Ruddy Duck	X		X	X				X				
Ring-necked Pheasant	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Ruffed Grouse			X		X	X	X	X	X			
Sharp-tailed Grouse						X						
Spruce Grouse							X					
Greater Prairie-Chicken										X		
Wild Turkey	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X
Common Loon				X	X	X	X	X	X			
Pied-billed Grebe	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Red-necked Grebe	X					X						
American White Pelican	X		X		X						X	
Double-crested Cormorant	X	X	X	X	X			X			X	
American Bittern	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Least Bittern	X		X			X						
Great Blue Heron	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X		X
Great Egret	X	X	X	X							X	X
Cattle Egret	X											
Snowy Egret	X											
Green Heron	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			X	
Black-crowned Night-Heron	X	X	X									
Turkey Vulture	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	
Osprey	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Bald Eagle	X			X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Northern Harrier	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Sharp-shinned Hawk			X	X	X							
Cooper's Hawk	X	X	X	X	X			X			X	X
Northern Goshawk									X			
Red-shouldered Hawk			X									
Broad-winged Hawk	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X			
Red-tailed Hawk	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Rough-legged Hawk				X						X		
American Kestrel	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X		
Merlin							X	X				
Peregrine Falcon	X	X								X		
Virginia Rail	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			
Yellow Rail						X						
Sora	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Common Gallinule	X		X									
American Coot	X	X	X	X		X		X				
Sandhill Crane	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Black-bellied Plover	X					X						
Semipalmated Plover	X	X	X			X	X					
Killdeer	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Black-necked Stilt	X											
Spotted Sandpiper	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Solitary Sandpiper	X		X	X	X			X		X		
Greater Yellowlegs	X		X	X			X	X		X		

(Continued)

Table 2. *Continued.*

Species	Winnebago #1	Milwaukee/ Ozaukee	Fond du Lac	Waukesha	Waupaca	Burnett	Oneida	Marathon	Florence	Portage/ Waupaca	Winnebago #2	Ozaukee
Lesser Yellowlegs	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X		
Upland Sandpiper	X					X				X		
Ruddy Turnstone	X											
Sanderling	X											
Semipalmated Sandpiper	X	X	X								X	
Least Sandpiper	X	X	X				X	X				
White-rumped Sandpiper	X	X	X								X	
Baird's Sandpiper		X										
Pectoral Sandpiper		X	X									
Dunlin	X	X	X	X		X				X		
Short-billed Dowitcher	X		X									
Wilson's Snipe	X		X	X	X	X		X				
American Woodcock	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Wilson's Phalarope	X											
Bonaparte's Gull	X	X					X	X				
Ring-billed Gull	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
Herring Gull	X	X	X	X	X			X			X	X
Caspian Tern	X	X		X				X				X
Black Tern	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			
Common Tern	X	X										
Forster's Tern	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Rock Pigeon	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Eurasian Collared-Dove		X										
Mourning Dove	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Black-billed Cuckoo	X	X	X		X	X	X		X			
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	X	X	X			X						
Eastern Screech-Owl	X	X	X		X							
Great Horned Owl	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	
Barred Owl	X	X	X		X	X			X	X		
Northern Saw-whet Owl					X		X					
Common Nighthawk	X	X		X	X	X						
Eastern Whip-poor-will		X		X	X	X	X		X			
Chimney Swift	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Belted Kingfisher	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Red-headed Woodpecker	X	X			X		X			X		
Red-bellied Woodpecker	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker					X	X	X	X	X			
Downy Woodpecker	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		
Hairy Woodpecker	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Northern Flicker	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pileated Woodpecker	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X		
Olive-sided Flycatcher	X	X				X			X			
Eastern Wood-Pewee	X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X	
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher		X		X	X		X		X			
Acadian Flycatcher	X	X	X	X								
Alder Flycatcher	X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X	
Willow Flycatcher	X	X	X									
Least Flycatcher	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Eastern Phoebe	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Great Crested Flycatcher	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Eastern Kingbird	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Yellow-throated Vireo	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X		
Blue-headed Vireo		X			X		X		X			
Warbling Vireo	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Red-eyed Vireo	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Blue Jay	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
American Crow	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Common Raven					X	X	X		X			
Horned Lark	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	
Purple Martin	X	X	X		X	X		X			X	X
Tree Swallow	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
N. Rough-winged Swallow	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Bank Swallow	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Cliff Swallow	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Barn Swallow	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Black-capped Chickadee	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Boreal Chickadee							X					
Tufted Titmouse	X			X	X	X						
Red-breasted Nuthatch	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
White-breasted Nuthatch	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X

(Continued)

Table 2. *Continued.*

Species	Winnebago #1	Milwaukee/ Ozaukee	Fond du Lac	Waukesha	Waupaca	Burnett	Oneida	Marathon	Florence	Portage/ Waupaca	Winnebago #2	Ozaukee
Brown Creeper		X	X	X	X		X					
House Wren	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Winter Wren			X		X	X	X		X			
Sedge Wren	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X			X
Marsh Wren	X	X	X	X		X						
Golden-crowned Kinglet				X	X		X					
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	X			X				X				
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	X	X	X	X	X			X			X	
Eastern Bluebird	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Veery	X	X	X		X	X		X	X			
Gray-cheeked Thrush		X										
Swainson's Thrush	X	X	X	X								
Hermit Thrush				X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Wood Thrush	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			
American Robin	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Gray Catbird	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Northern Mockingbird	X											
Brown Thrasher	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
European Starling	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
American Pipit	X											
Cedar Waxwing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Ovenbird	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Northern Waterthrush	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Louisiana Waterthrush		X	X									
Blue-winged Warbler	X	X	X	X	X			X		X		
Golden-winged Warbler					X	X			X			
Black-and-white Warbler	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Tennessee Warbler	X	X	X	X	X						X	
Orange-crowned Warbler		X										
Nashville Warbler	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X			
Northern Parula	X	X	X	X			X		X			
Magnolia Warbler	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X			
Yellow Warbler	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Chestnut-sided Warbler	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Palm Warbler	X	X		X	X		X	X		X		X
Pine Warbler	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Yellow-rumped Warbler	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		
Cape May Warbler	X	X										
Black-throated Blue Warbler		X							X		X	
Black-throat. Green Warbler	X	X	X	X			X	X	X		X	
Blackburnian Warbler	X	X		X			X					
Prairie Warbler				X								
Bay-breasted Warbler	X	X		X	X							
Blackpoll Warbler	X	X	X		X						X	
Cerulean Warbler			X									
American Redstart	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Prothonotary Warbler		X										
Connecticut Warbler		X										
Mourning Warbler	X	X	X		X		X		X		X	
Common Yellowthroat	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Hooded Warbler		X	X	X								
Wilson's Warbler	X	X	X	X		X					X	
Canada Warbler	X	X	X			X	X		X		X	
Eastern Towhee	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Chipping Sparrow	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Clay-colored Sparrow	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Field Sparrow	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Vesper Sparrow	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Lark Sparrow						X						
Savannah Sparrow	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Grasshopper Sparrow	X		X		X					X		
Henslow's Sparrow	X	X	X	X					X			
Le Conte's Sparrow						X	X					
Song Sparrow	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lincoln's Sparrow		X		X			X		X			
Swamp Sparrow	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
White-throated Sparrow		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
White-crowned Sparrow		X		X				X		X		X
Lapland Longspur											X	
Scarlet Tanager	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	

(Continued)

Table 2. *Continued.*

Species	Winne-bago #1	Milwaukee/ Ozaukee	Fond du Lac	Waukesha	Waupaca	Burnett	Oneida	Marathon	Florence	Portage/ Waupaca	Winne-bago #2	Ozaukee
Northern Cardinal	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Indigo Bunting	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
Dickcissel		X			X							
Bobolink	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Red-winged Blackbird	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Eastern Meadowlark	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Western Meadowlark										X		
Yellow-headed Blackbird	X		X	X		X		X				
Rusty Blackbird				X								
Brewer's Blackbird	X	X				X	X	X	X	X		
Common Grackle	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Brown-headed Cowbird	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Orchard Oriole	X	X	X	X							X	
Baltimore Oriole	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Purple Finch				X	X		X		X			
House Finch	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	
Pine Siskin		X		X		X	X	X				
American Goldfinch	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Evening Grosbeak									X			
House Sparrow	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

There were many excellent birds seen this year, and among the locally exceptional birds were Tufted Titmouse on the Burnett count; Black Tern, Prairie Warbler, and Brewer's Blackbird on the Milwaukee/Ozaukee count; Black-necked Stilt and Northern Mockingbird on the Winnebago count; and Field Sparrow, Forster's Tern and Red-headed Woodpecker on the Oneida count.

The following birds were observed on only one count—those in bold are considered **rare/very rare but regular** according to the official WSO checklist:

Burnett—Sharp-tailed Grouse, **Yellow Rail**, Lark Sparrow;
Florence—Northern Goshawk, Evening Grosbeak;
Fond du Lac—Northern Pintail, Red-shouldered Hawk, Cerulean Warbler;
Marathon—Bufflehead, Common Merganser;
Milwaukee/Ozaukee—Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Baird's Sandpiper, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Orange-crowned Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Connecticut Warbler;
Oneida—**Spruce Grouse**, Boreal Chickadee;
Waukesha—**Prairie Warbler**, Rusty Blackbird;
Waupaca—Greater Scaup;
Portage/Waupaca—Greater Prairie Chicken, Lapland Longspur, Western Meadowlark;
Winnebago #1—Canvasback, Cattle Egret, **Snowy Egret**, **Black-necked Stilt**, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Wilson's Phalarope, Northern Mockingbird, American Pipit.

Several of this year's May Day Counts were submitted as eBird checklists. This is an excellent—and easy—way to ensure your data are fully utilized. To submit your count totals via eBird, simply follow the instructions on the newly updated May Day Count webpage on the WSO website.

Rules for the WSO May Day Counts

1. Count period is 1–31 May.
2. Count must be taken within a 24 hour calendar day.
3. Count must cover a set area, ideally a circle consisting of a predetermined distance diameter (10, 15, 20 miles??) or a county.
4. The number of parties and observers involved may vary.
5. Count areas may be re-covered as often as desired during the count day, unless individuals are being tallied.
6. The counting of individuals is optional (but encouraged).
7. Do not initiate a May Day Count within an area where one is already conducted. Instead join the existing count or establish one in a new area. If you are thinking of doing a May Day Count and are unsure if there is one already started in your area, you can contact me at birdmandaniel@gmail.com or at the mailing address at the beginning of this article.
8. There are no count fees.
9. May Day Counts can be submitted

online via eBird or mailed in on paper.

a. Completely document unusual species, whether they are late or rare.

b. Don't forget to include details on weather conditions (i.e., temp. wind speed, sky conditions).

Blue-winged Warbler posing for Dennis Malueg.

Lessons From the Seasons: Spring 2012

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Just one year ago I described, in my "Lessons from the Seasons: Spring 2011," a picture of leafless trees well into May. What a difference a year makes. In rich contrast to the spring of 2011, 2012 weather patterns brought summer-like temperatures in March. This spring lesson is not focussing on spring 2012 weather patterns, but on larger climate, bird, and birder concerns. More detail regarding the weather's influence on birds in Spring 2012 can be found in The Spring Season: 2012 report elsewhere in this issue of the Pigeon.

The vast difference in weather patterns from one spring to the next is illustrative of the confusion that still persists when discussing climate change. The media, in general, are the primary catalyst for this confusion, simply by their preferred doctrine of presenting two, and only two, sides to any story. Looking for the quick two-sided sound bite has resulted in a much-diminished trust in, and understanding of, the scientific method which involves multiple avenues of inquiry. Tomes have been printed on climate data, modeling of potential changes, and denial of climate change, however; for this lesson, we are focussing on Wisconsin birds and birders. Therefore, a stage must be set, because the terms weather and climate are used throughout and an understanding of meanings is in order.

Weather is short-term and describes atmospheric conditions at a certain place for a certain amount of time. Weather patterns for any day or season cannot be used to prognosticate long-term climate effects. Persons who study weather are meteorologists. Climate describes the average conditions over a longer timeframe, quite often defined as more than 30 years. Persons who study climate are climatologists.

Ornithologists studying weather or climate impacts on birds, oftimes find different effects as illustrated in Table 1.

With the definitions in place, let's look at the spring 2012 data. An outstanding summary of the weather patterns and the effects on bird migration was written for the eBird News by Tom Prestby. He chronicled the weather phenomenon with migratory response effects of many species. Numerous early arrival dates were recorded in March 2012. Tom compared average arrival data from eBird data through 2011 and compared them with 2012 data. This informa-

Table 1. Effects on Birds—a partial list.

Climate	Weather
Change or shift in range	Individual or population deaths
Change in migration patterns	Individual breeding fitness
Narrowing of environmental range	Migrants blown off course
Timing of prey species	Local survival due to rain
Timing of predator species	Parasite response to local weather
Timing of nuisance species	Migrants use of favorable winds
Drying prairie potholes	Metabolic rates
Selective population differences	Courtship patterns

tion is summarized in Andrea's excellent Spring Season Report (pp. 57–101).

Climate effects analysis on bird migration has also utilized eBird data. Many studies have shown shifts in migratory phenology, but to date the data reflect much variation in the magnitude of responses. Using long-term data from eBird, Hurlbert and Liang (2012) found in their study that 18 species of birds shifted their arrival dates between 0.8 days and 6 days for each 1 degree Celsius increase in temperature. They also found that species which migrated short distances or those with broad ecological niches were the earliest migrants.

These researchers conducted a study of 18 species over a large geographic area. They found that eBird data, entered by citizen scientists, were a means to start the process of understanding migration speed. Their time frame of only ten years doesn't quite meet the long-term definition of addressing climate, but it's the best we have for answering some research questions. Waiting for 20 more years of data may be much too late for some species.

The questions that come to most birder's minds are either "How can I help?" or "What good is my participation in citizen-base science monitoring, if we need 20 more years of data to make a decision?" Both responses are nearly the same. Let's look at the second question first. The core of this question revolves around the concept that we need all the answers before we can make a decision—remember that continual erosion of trust and understanding of the scientific method.

Science involves use of mathematics, especially probabilities, to provide interpretation and give context to the data. Developing models gives us the best method of describing the essential concepts required to answer the scientific questions to as close to 100% as possible within the limitations of the data. Better and more robust data give us an even higher percentage of confidence that the predictions are accurate. I always find it enlightening to remember that gravity is not 100% proven, but everyone on earth believes in gravity.

How can I help?—continue birding and submitting your sightings. Especially important for migration studies are sightings during or immediately after out-of-the-ordinary weather events. More robust data are important for a better understanding of how bird life works.

Probably a more important activity

for birders is to convey the message to others. A fine avenue for getting the message out is International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD). This worldwide event focuses attention on migratory birds. All aspects of the perils and benefits migratory birds accrue through this remarkable migratory activity can be catalysts for understanding. Lay persons, and sometimes politicians, can be enlightened. Positive messages about our beloved birds and what we can do to help them respond to a changing climate may have more impact than any data we gather. Please consider participating in IMBD this year.

Literature Cited

Hurlbert A.H, and Zhongfei Liang. 2012. Spatiotemporal variation in avian migration phenology: climate science reveals effects of climate change. PLoS ONE 7(2): e31662. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0031662; available at http://www.plosone.org

White-breasted Nuthatch pictured by Dennis Connell.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak posing for Dennis Connell.

The Spring Season: 2012

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Spring 2012 should be remembered for an unprecedented shift in early season phenology. As will be evident in the species accounts that follow, record warmth in March opened the proverbial floodgates and waterfowl, sparrows, and other passerines gushed in. Not only were five sparrow species record early, but three of them—Savannah, Henslow's, and Lincoln's—set new all-time early arrival dates. In the "northwoods," Golden Eagle migration was accelerated. Records kept in the Chequamegon Bay area by Dick Verch and Ryan Brady reveal that eagle migration peaked roughly two weeks ahead of schedule. In addition, there was strong evidence that many Brown Creeper, Winter Wren, and Hermit Thrush overshot the southern tier of counties and arrived directly on their northern territories.

Other phenological oddities included: 1) wood frogs and spring peepers heard in Oconto County mid-March; 2) data from the website wisconsinbutterflies.org indicated that the first Red Admiral was seen 21 March (nineteen days earlier than the previous early sighting record) and the first Eastern Tiger Swallowtail was reported 28 March (twenty-two days earlier than the previous early record); and 3) maple trees were tapped and flowing mid-March in Vilas County; however, a lack of freeze-thaw cycles curtailed production of sap shortly thereafter, reducing yield.

Weather patterns conducive to strong migration continued late March into early April when three warbler species, Louisiana Waterthrush, Palm, and Pine Warbler set new all-time early arrival dates. Then, the first wave of shorebirds made landfall and Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, and Dunlin set their own new all-time early arrival dates. While the aforementioned species were captivating bird watchers statewide, an interesting phenomenon developed late March into mid-April. There was some radar evidence that while the Mississippi River flyway remained active, the eastern part of the state experienced a slowing of the pace with which birds returned. This may have been due to strong winds from the east and a period of cooler weather.

That period was brought to an abrupt conclusion early in the morning of 2 May. Weather conditions around Dane County stalled large concentrations of migrants and created a major fallout event. That morn-

ing Jesse Ellis counted 83 species in two and a half hours of bird watching around Frautschi Point. David La Puma and Adrian Lesak tallied 94 species over five hours of walking several area hotspots. The following day, observers indicated that rainstorms had replicated similar fallouts in Calumet, Green Lake, and Portage Counties. Daryl Tessen found 18 warbler species plus a Summer Tanager at High Cliff SP and Rob Pendergast counted 93 species during a couple hours of birding around Portage. Within one week of these early May fallouts, Scissor-tailed and Vermilion Flycatchers were discovered in Waupaca and Milwaukee Counties, respectively. By mid-late May weather conditions had decidedly slowed migratory progress. If spring began with a bang, it certainly ended with somewhat of a whimper.

Data and Statistics

Data are primarily derived from eBird. eBird is, simply put, the best way to contribute observations. From a contributor's point of view, submission of data is easy. From a field note compiler's point of view, eBird uses rigorous data filters combined with personal review of exceptional observations by a team of Wisconsin bird experts. This provides a high level of "quality control" for the data. Other sources utilized include paper county reports (either hand-written or computer generated WSO forms) and WSO Short and Long Forms.

The species total for the season was 318, which is above average and also the number found in 2011.

The Accounts

The following species were **not** included in the written accounts below: Canada Goose, Mallard, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, European Starling, House Finch, American Goldfinch, and House Sparrow.

Symbols and Terms used:

* = Species requiring a Short Form to be submitted to WSO or details to be entered directly into the eBird database for review by the field note compiler.

** = Species requiring a Long Form to be submitted for consideration by the WSO Records Committee. *Editor's note: The use of these forms has changed since the Spring 2012 season. Check The Passenger Pigeon, 74(4), pp. 341–344, for the species on what is now called the Review List and which require the Rare Bird Documentation Form.*

record cut-off date = a threshold date chosen by Bob Domagalski which distinguishes the normal arrival/departure dates from exceptional records (access the Early/Late Records list by visiting the WSO webpage and looking under "Report Sightings").

atlas = The WSO Atlas of Breeding Birds of Wisconsin (Cutright et al. 2006) censused the counties of the entire state for breeding bird activity.

Abbreviations used:

BOP = beginning of period (first week of March); EOP = end of period (last week of May); m. obs. = multiple observers; NWR = National Wildlife Refuge; SNA = State Natural Area; SP = State Park; SWA = State Wildlife

Area; VPA = Voluntary Public Access; WA = Wildlife Area; WSO = Wisconsin Society of Ornithology.

REPORTS
(1 March–31 May 2012)

Greater White-fronted Goose—Reported in Dane, Dodge, Jefferson, Kenosha, Manitowoc, Outagamie, Ozaukee, Racine, Sauk, and Waukesha Counties during the first week of period (hereafter, BOP). The Manitowoc report consisted of 8 individuals at Collins Marsh (Domagalski). By 8 March Tessen had already tallied the season's high count with his report of 1,000 birds in Columbia County. Seen in Bayfield County 22 March (Anich and Oksiuta). Single birds were still being reported 14 May in Wood County (Brady) and last week of period (hereafter, EOP) in Dane at Vilas Park (Graham).

Snow Goose—Seen in Brown, Dane, Grant, Jefferson, La Crosse, Manitowoc, Outagamie, Portage, Racine, Vernon, and Walworth Counties BOP. The Dane report, from Thiessen, was a flock of 74 birds. Over the course of the season, only two reports were higher: 95 at Nicholson WA in Racine 12 March (Howe) and 145 in Polk County 16 March (Maercklein). May reports came from Waukesha County on the 3rd (Moretti), Marathon

County on the 17th (Belter), and Ashland County on the 29th (Larson).

***Snow* × *Ross's Goose*—**Stutz discovered two 3 March in Jefferson County and Lindemer found one 4 April in Dane County.

***Ross's Goose**—**The first week of the period produced a report from Manitowoc County (Domagalski), where they uncommonly occur, as well as, in Dane, Jefferson, La Crosse, and Rock Counties. High Counts of 19–31 individuals spanned the period from 6–16 March and originated from Dane, Outagamie, Racine, and Rock Counties. The final reports occurred 13 and 16 April in Manitowoc (Trick) and Dodge Counties (Gustafson), respectively. Found in at least nineteen counties during the period, including Ashland County 28 March (Krerowicz).

***Cackling Goose*—**Paulios found 40 birds 5 March at Lower Mud Lake in Dane County. Other reports around this time period came from the counties of Brown, Dodge, Iowa, Jefferson, Kewaunee, Ozaukee, Rock, Sauk, and Walworth. A flock of 200 was seen 8 March in Columbia County (Tessen). Lesser numbers were reported in Adams County (40 birds) 18 March and Dodge County (70 birds) 17 April. Last seen 12 May by Betchkal at Tiffany SWA in Buffalo County.

***Mute Swan*—**With the exception of Ashland County 3 March (J. Knickelbine) and Door County 2 March (S. Peterson), this species was exclusively found in southeastern counties. A high total of 16 individuals was reported BOP in Racine (Frank) and Waukesha (Szymczak) Counties.

***Trumpeter Swan*—**Scattered around the state early in the season north to Bayfield, Douglas, and Sawyer Counties. Haseleu observed 42 birds near Crex Meadows in Burnett County 26 April. There were EOP reports from the southern counties of Dodge (Frank) and Manitowoc (Domagalski). Reported from a minimum of forty-four counties.

***Tundra Swan*—**Seen over the first week of the period in Crawford, Dane, Jefferson, La Crosse, Outagamie, Racine, Vernon, and Winnebago Counties. High numbers totaling over 1,000 birds were concentrated in the northeastern counties of Marinette (J. Campbell) and Oconto (Ziesmer) 14 March (possibly same flock?). Final observations came from Oneida County 3 May at the Rainbow Flowage (Krakowski) and Door County 20 May (M. Weber).

***Wood Duck*—**BOP in over a dozen counties and found north to Taylor County by 10 March (Risch). Fifty-six individuals were reported in Waukesha County 23 May (Szymczak).

***Gadwall*—**Seen in over a dozen counties BOP, its abundance was demonstrated by the 130 birds already present 4 March at Upper Mud Lake in Dane County (Schwarz). One week later, Paulios noted the season's high count, 350 birds, at Lower Mud Lake in Dane. Bridge's observation of four individuals at Zeloski Marsh in Jefferson County 30 May is of note because the species was not detected here during the atlas.

***American Wigeon*—**Another plentiful duck species, as it was found in over a dozen southern counties BOP. The largest concentrations were found 25 March in Outagamie County (650 birds, Tessen) and 31 March at the Rangeline Flowage in Marathon County (200 birds, Belter). Found EOP in two counties, Manitowoc (J. and P. Trick) and Marathon (Belter) which did not report them during the atlas.

***American Black Duck*—**BOP in over a dozen southern counties including a 3 March observation of 175 birds at Bay Beach SP in Brown County (Schilke) where they over-wintered. In addition, two birds were seen that same day all the way north in Douglas County (Keyel and Prestby)! EOP observations were consistent with atlas findings. Found in at least forty counties.

***American Black Duck* × *Mallard*—**Reports only originated from Brown County 3 March (several birds, Schilke), Milwaukee County 3 April (two birds, Szymczak), and Portage County 12 March (one bird, Pendergast).

***Blue-winged Teal*—**BOP in Dane, Manitowoc, and Ozaukee Counties. Then, the species made a northern incursion 14 March into Eau Claire (Betchkal) and Taylor Counties (Risch). Etter Hale counted 350 birds in Jeffer-

son County 22 April. Lesser numbers, 175–200 individuals, were noted in Crawford (9 April, Stark) and Grant Counties (1 April, Bridge).

Cinnamon Teal***—Single birds were found in Adams County (Fig. 1) at the 6th Avenue Marsh 18 April and 12 May and Waukesha County (Fig. 2) at Vernon Marsh 29–30 April. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records" and "By the Wayside."

Northern Shoveler—Brown County was among over a dozen BOP locations for this species. High totals of 400–500 migrants were found in Dane (7 March, Lindemer), Fond du Lac (7 April, Stratton), and Trempealeau Counties (5 April, Stratton, again!). Numerous reports in the last week of the period included both counties with previously detected breeding activity and those without, raising the question of whether the species might have still been actively migrating EOP.

Northern Pintail—Present in over a dozen counties BOP. S. Cutright tallied 187 from his counting station at Harrington Beach SP in Ozaukee County 7 March. A flock of 160 was found 24 March in Jefferson County (Bridge). The sole report from the final week of the period also came from Bridge in Jefferson. The species was not detected in Jefferson during the atlas.

Green-winged Teal—Present in over a dozen counties BOP, including a report of 46 from Harrington Beach SP (S. Cutright) in Ozaukee. Counts totaling at least 500 birds came from Jefferson County 24 March at the Findlay Road VPA (Bridge) and from Collins Marsh in Manitowoc County 14 April (Domagalski). Found in seven counties EOP, including Bayfield (Brady), where it was not reported during the atlas (1995–2000).

Canvasback—BOP in over a dozen counties, including a whopping 2,000 in Vernon County 3 March (Jackson). The Vernon group, along the Mississippi River, built up to 10,000 by 11 March. The sole report during EOP came from Vilas County at Powell Marsh 29 May (Brady). This is of special note because the species not detected there during the atlas (field work was conducted 1995–2000).

Redhead—Detected in over a dozen counties BOP north to Door (S. Peterson). On 31 March, Anich and Keyel counted 1,500 at Maslowski Beach in Ashland County. Lesser totals of 400 individuals were noted during the time period 9–25 March in four counties: Door, Douglas, Trempealeau, and Waukesha. Possibly still migrating EOP, as the species was found in five non-atlas counties: Ashland, Bayfield, Kewaunee, Outagamie, and Waukesha.

Ring-necked Duck—Found in over a dozen counties BOP north to Bay Beach in Brown. Groups totaling 2,000 were found 15 March in Jefferson County at Zeloski Marsh (Stutz) and 31 March in Marathon County at the Rangeline Flowage (Belter). Other high totals reported during the season were 750 or fewer birds. Reported EOP from counties consistent with the atlas.

Greater Scaup—Found BOP in counties along Lake Michigan, as well as, inland at Brown, Dane, Fond du Lac, La Crosse, Waukesha, and Winnebago. Totals of 2,000 were found 31 March in Ashland County (Anich and Keyel) and 19 April in Brown County (B. and K. Kavanagh). Lesser totals ranging from 1,000–1,800 were found in Bayfield, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, and Ozaukee Counties. The species lingered EOP in the southern Lake Michigan counties of Kewaunee, Manitowoc, and Racine.

Lesser Scaup—Noted in over a dozen counties BOP, including 250 birds reported 7 March in Dane (Lindemer). La Crosse County hosted 1,000 birds 7–31 March (Jackson and Puchalski). Stark counted 800 in Crawford County 13 March. Seen EOP in these counties that did not report birds during the atlas: Ashland, Bayfield, Florence, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Marathon, and Racine.

Harlequin Duck*—In Milwaukee County, between 1–3 birds were reported in the geographically linked sites of Lakeshore SP and the Milwaukee Art Museum 7–24 March. In the same county, a separate male and female pair was found near Bradford Beach and North Point between 10 March-12 May. In Ozaukee County, a single bird was detected at Harrington Beach SP during the 11 March WSO field trip. S. Cutright later saw 3 at Harrington 11 April. Single birds were also present on 7 April

(J. DeBoer) and 20–21 April (m. obs.) in Racine County.

Surf Scoter—Reported inland in Sauk County 13 April (A. Holschbach) and Green Lake County 15 April (Yoerger). S. Cutright noted the passage of 20–28 individuals at Harrington Beach SP in Ozaukee County 14–21 March. Ten birds were counted at Wind Point in Racine County 6 May (Betchkal). Last reported 19 May in Ozaukee (Frank). Found in seven counties.

White-winged Scoter—Nolan found the only inland bird 14 May in Dane County. S. Cutright counted 64–69 birds between 16 March-1 April in Ozaukee County. Paulios reported 20 individuals 7 March in the Sheboygan Harbor in Sheboygan County. Last reported in the counties of Manitowoc (Pendergast) 15 May, Milwaukee (Korducki) 19 May, and in Ashland on the 21st (Tessen). Seen in nine counties.

Black Scoter—Schaefer monitored the only inland bird 11–16 April at Big Cedar Lake in Washington County. Eight birds were observed at FBMP in Ozaukee County 14 April (Schaefer and Szymczak). The last was seen in Bayfield County 28 May (Brady). Only reported in six counties.

Long-tailed Duck—All reports were confined to counties along Lake Michigan with the exception of a 10 April report from Rock (Smallwood). A flock of 400 was reported 1 March by W. Mueller in Milwaukee County and S. Cutright counted 1,054 at Harrington Beach SP in Ozaukee County 6 March. The final May observations spanned the 5th–8th in Door County and Ozaukee County.

Bufflehead—Widespread in counties along Lake Michigan, as well as, in scattered southern inland counties BOP. The largest group, 300 birds, was seen 22 March at Lower Mud Lake in Dane County (Paulios). Separate counts totaling 100 individuals were reported in Bayfield, Green Lake, and Racine Counties over the compact time period between 31 March–7 April. Last reported 27 May in Bayfield (m. obs.).

Common Goldeneye—Unmatched anywhere else in the state was a count of 9,000 in Winnebago County BOP (Tessen). Lesser numbers, 300–400, were seen in Dane, Douglas, and Vernon Counties 4–24 March. EOP reports from these counties: Bayfield, Door, Douglas, and Vilas.

Barrow's Goldeneye**—A male (present since Winter 2011–2012) was seen 11 March during the WSO field trip to the Sheboygan Harbor, Sheboygan County. However, no reports were officially submitted to the WSO Records Committee for validation.

Hooded Merganser—Found in well over a dozen counties BOP, including a single bird seen by K. Kavanagh all the way up in Florence County 2 March! Belter saw 500 on Lake Wausau in Marathon County 14 March and 175 were counted 11 March in Trempealeau County (Puchalski).

Common Merganser—Their presence was noted statewide BOP, including north to Bayfield (Anich) and Douglas Counties (Keyel and Prestby). The season's high count, 600 birds, was already tallied 4 March in Dane County (Schwarz), between Upper Mud Lake and Lake Waubesa. Flocks numbering 400–500 were reported from Manitowoc, Marathon, Milwaukee, and Vernon Counties between 3–13 March. EOP reports came only from traditional northern tier counties: Ashland, Bayfield, Door, Douglas, Oneida, and Vilas.

Red-breasted Merganser—BOP in counties along Lake Michigan and inland in Brown, Fond du Lac, and Waukesha. Hahn and Prestby conservatively estimated 2,500 in Milwaukee County 17 March. On 6 April, N. Cutright counted 867 in Ozaukee County. Lingered in counties along Lake Michigan EOP, as well as in Douglas 28 May (Keyel) where 90 birds were seen.

Ruddy Duck—Seen in nine counties BOP, including a sizeable group of 102 birds in Rock 3 March (Yoerger). One month later, Rock was also the site of the largest concentration, 2,000 birds on Lake Koshkonong (Smallwood). Some 1,045 were seen on the Jefferson County side of this same body of water 5 April (Bridge). Reported EOP from these counties: Dane, Dodge, Fond du Lac, Lafayette, Marathon, Marquette, Outagamie, Racine, and St. Croix.

Northern Bobwhite—This species is a perennial "head scratcher," with the origin of observed birds always in question. The counties where reports originated included: Brown, Columbia, Dane, Iowa, Jefferson, Kenosha, Manitowoc, Ozaukee, Polk, Racine, Rock, and Trempealeau.

Gray Partridge—The sole report, of 2 birds, came from Iowa County 17 May (Hodgson).

Ring-necked Pheasant—Highest numbers came from the following counties: 25 birds at Eldorado WA in Fond du Lac 9 April (Schneider), 13 birds 14 April in Polk (Maercklein), and 11 in Vernon 14 April (Hayes).

Ruffed Grouse—The most southeastern report came from the Northern Kettle Moraine 19 May in Fond du Lac County (T. Schultz). Separate counts ranging from 10–20 birds came from Ashland, Burnett, Florence, Marinette, and Oneida Counties between 26 March and 27 April.

Spruce Grouse*—High counts of 7 birds were yielded from extensive surveys in Bayfield (7 March, Keyel) and Forest Counties (11 March, Prestby). Anich detected 5 birds 29 March in Iron County. Also found in Ashland, Florence, Oneida, Sawyer, and Vilas Counties.

Sharp-tailed Grouse—Reported in five counties. Oksiuta found 3 birds 23 April at Moquah Barrens in Bayfield County. Burnett County had several reports, with 5 birds being the most found (14 April, S. Spencer). J. and P. Trick saw 7 males and 3 females in Douglas County 21 April. One bird was seen in flight 14 March at Riley Lake in Price County (David). Cameron also saw a bird in flight at Pershing SWA in Taylor County 26 May.

Greater Prairie-Chicken—Found in three counties that have been the source of observations in prior years: Adams, Marathon, and Portage. The largest number seen was 32 at Buena Vista Grasslands in Portage (m. obs.).

Wild Turkey—Groups totaling 100 birds were found during March in both Oconto (Rickaby) and Ozaukee (Petherick) Counties.

Red-throated Loon—Three observations eclipsed the record cut-off date of 10 March: 6 and 8 March at Harrington Beach SP in Ozaukee County (S. Cutright) and 8 March at Two Rivers in Manitowoc County (T. and B. Kocourek). S. Cutright also tallied the high count, 15 birds, 25 March in Ozaukee. Additional observations came from Milwaukee, Racine, and Sheboygan Counties through 5 May, when the last southern report occurred at Forest Beach Migratory Preserve in Ozaukee (m. obs.). A full three weeks passed without any other observations until 28–30 May when numbers ranging between 1–4 birds showed up in Bayfield and Douglas Counties.

Common Loon—First seen 6 March in Ozaukee County (S. Cutright). The second report was made further north along Lake Michigan during the WSO field trip 11 March in Sheboygan County (m. obs.). Then, found inland in Waukesha County on the 13th (Szymczak). Risch saw his first bird 20 March in Taylor County. Single birds were also discovered north in Barron (Haseleu) and Burnett (Java) Counties 22 March. In years past, Dane County frequently laid claim to the seasonal high count; however, this year, S. Cutright's count of 60 birds in Ozaukee 26 March was the largest concentration found. This was most likely due to many bodies of water no longer being iced over. Southern EOP reports came from Dane (Henrikson), Jefferson (Etter Hale), and Ozaukee (Schaefer and Szymczak) Counties.

Pied-billed Grebe—Detected BOP in Manitowoc (Domagalski), Waukesha (Szymczak), and Winnebago (Ziebell) Counties. Two birds were found north to Florence County 9 March (K. Kavanagh). Etter Hale counted 168 (!) on Rock Lake in Jefferson County 1 April.

Horned Grebe—Several appear to have over-wintered near Petroleum Pier in Milwaukee County and were seen BOP (m. obs.). Suddenly, 6 March, observations came in from Dodge (Szymczak), Manitowoc (Sontag), Ozaukee (S. Cutright), and Waukesha (Szymczak) Counties. A bird appeared in Rowley's Bay in Door County 10 March. Finally made it north to Douglas County 1 April (Svingen). Belter saw 300 in Marathon County 14 April and Brady counted 150 at the Bono Creek Boat Launch in Bayfield County 19 April. Last reported in Bur-

nett County 22 May (Tessen) and Bayfield County 28 May (Brady).

Red-necked Grebe—Riveredge Bird Club members found 2 birds at Grassy Lake in Columbia County 17 March, which is prior to the current record cut-off date of 25 March. The next county report occurred in Marathon 30 March when Belter found 3 birds on Lake Wausau. The following day, 19 birds (the season's high count) were found in Ashland County (Anich and Keyel), 7 birds were noted in adjacent Bayfield County (same team of birders), T. Wood reported from Green Lake County, and 2 were found in Juneau County at Necedah NWR (m. obs.). The last bird of the season was found in Bayfield 27 May (Brady). Only Crex Meadows in Burnett County and Schoeneberg Marsh in Columbia reported nesting (one and two pairs, respectively).

Eared Grebe*—While 2011 was a remarkable year for this species, 2012 represented a return to normal. Edmonson saw one on Lake Mendota in Dane County 7 April and Tessen found one in Green Lake County 12 April.

Western Grebe*—Reported from three counties in early May. A bird was seen in Sheboygan County on the 1st (Tessen). Jackson and Puchalski photographed a bird in Vernon County at Stoddard Boat Landing on the 8th. Svingen observed 2 birds at Wisconsin Point in Douglas County the following day.

Double-crested Cormorant—Over-wintering birds were seen BOP in Brown, Fond du Lac, and Winnebago Counties. Migrants were seen 13–14 March in Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties (both Szymczak). Prestby came across 4 birds at Bootjack Creek in Oneida County 19 March and Anich saw his first in Bayfield County two days later. The largest concentrations were noted in the following counties: Brown (2,000 birds 3 May, Prestby), Manitowoc (2,500 birds 24 April, Sontag), and Winnebago (3,512 birds 7 May, Uslabar).

American White Pelican—Over the past ten years, this species has been documented over-wintering in Brown, La Crosse, and Winnebago Counties. Of those counties, birds were only present BOP in Winnebago. The general statewide record cut-off date is 9 March. Jackson photo-documented 25 birds found in Trempealeau County 5 March. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records." As this species expands, perhaps this location will be among "new" over-wintering locations or was an anomaly resulting from an "early" spring? Next reported 12 March by J. DeBoer in Racine County. By 3 April, Oksiuta reported that birds had reached Bayfield County. Two thousand were seen 24 March at Goose Island in La Crosse County (Puchalski), 650 were counted in Winnebago 19 May (Ziebell), and by late-May through EOP numbers built to over 500 birds at Horicon Marsh NWR in Dodge County (m. obs.). Of the north-central counties, only Oneida and Vilas have produced reports in past years, so a sighting in Taylor County (Risch) was of note.

Brown Pelican—There are currently only nine prior records in the state, the last of which was in 2004. Maercklein saw one fly over the Polk/Pierce County line 3 April and submitted the findings to the WSO Records Committee. Two other observers submitted documentation (Fig. 3) when the bird was seen again five days later. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records."

American Bittern—First noted 4 April by T. Schultz at the White River Marsh in Green Lake County. Then, 3 birds were heard 6 April at Pershing SWA in Taylor County (Cameron). Brady ran wetland bird surveys in Wood County 13–14 May and had a combined total of 39 birds. Belter counted 8 at Mead SWA in Marathon County 12 May. Detected in at least forty-one counties.

Least Bittern—Reported 3 May in Columbia (Schilke) and Iowa (A. Holschbach) Counties. Next discovered 10 May in Dane (Paulios) and Marathon (Belter) Counties. All reports were of single birds, except for the 3 found in Outagamie County 26 May (S. Cutright and Setzer). This bird is rare in the extreme northern counties of the state, so observations in Ashland (Brady), Burnett (m. obs.), and Douglas (Keyel) were outstanding! Reported in fourteen counties.

Great Blue Heron—Distributed in the lower third of the state BOP and reported north to rookeries in Marathon (Belter) and Polk (B. Collins) Counties by mid-March. Belter noted that the Marathon rookery on Lake Wausau

Figure 1. Cinnamon Teal photographed on 12 May 2012 at 6th Avenue Marsh in Adams County by Rob Pendergast.

Figure 2. This Cinnamon Teal was at Vernon Marsh in Waukesha County when Jim Edlhuber took its picture on 29 April 2012.

built up to 100 birds by 29 March. There were also 100 at a rookery in St. Croix County 6 April (B. Collins).

Great Egret—The record cut-off date is 17 March, with only an 11 March observation in the time period before that. This year, a sighting 16 March in Racine County will join that earlier record (Anastasio). It was next found 25 March in Walworth County (Weberpal) and 28 March in Brown (J. Trick) and La Crosse (Epstein) Counties. Ziebell tallied 150 birds in Winnebago County 13 May. Fifty were found at Myrick Marsh in La Crosse County 15 May (Stratton). Reported again this year north to Ashland County (28 May, Anich), as they have several other times over the past decade in the geographically linked Ashland/Bayfield area.

Snowy Egret*—The record cut-off date for the species is 16 April with the three earlier dates falling 4, 11, and 13 of April. Four separate observers documented an individual seen in Dodge County 15 April (Fig. 4). See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records." Ziebell observed one in Winnebago County 18 April. The third county report came from Zappen 31 May in Trempealeau.

Little Blue Heron*—The sole report, of one adult 5–6 May, came from Grant County at Potosi Landing (Butson and later photographed by Yoerger).

Cattle Egret—Jackson and Puchalski saw the first bird 4 May in Trempealeau County. Seen the next day in Manitowoc (Murkowski) and Winnebago (Ziebell) Counties. A fourth county report originated from Waukesha (Weberpal) 9 May. Most noteworthy, was the bird Anich found in Ashland County 15 May (photographed by Brady).

Green Heron—Returned 14 April to Dane (Marschalek) and Jefferson (Murray) Counties. Over the next week, more were seen in Iowa, Milwaukee, and Racine Counties. Reached Bayfield County 3 May (M. Knickelbine). The high count, only 10 birds, was found 22 May at Schoeneberg Marsh in Columbia County (Marschalek).

Black-crowned Night-Heron—First reported from Lost Creek Wetland in Portage County 10 April (Pendergast). Not seen again until 17 April when Petherick found one at Veteran's Park Lagoon in Milwaukee County. Over the next week, more were seen in Brown, Dodge, Fond du Lac, and Waukesha Counties. Ziebell tallied 250 birds in Winnebago County 13 May. Boyle counted 19 birds at the aforementioned Veteran's Park Lagoon 1 May. Not surprisingly, the species was not reported north of Brown or Portage Counties.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron*—Yoerger found the only bird (an adult) in Lafayette County 6 May.

Glossy Ibis**—The only observation came from Pendergast, who found two in Outagamie County 21 May. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records."

White-faced Ibis**—Documentation was submitted by four different observers (Fig. 5) for an individual seen 17–19 April in Brown County. When originally seen on the 17th, this bird became the all-time early arrival. Photo-documentation (Fig. 6) was also provided (Jackson and Whitemarsh) for others seen in Trempealeau County 23 April. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records."

Plegadis ibis sp.**—Gustafson observed one 16 April at Horicon Marsh NWR in Dodge/Fond du Lac County. Yoerger found another in Grant County 21 April. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records."

Black Vulture**—Pendergast's sighting in Portage County 11 April becomes the 7th state record. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records" and "By the Wayside."

Turkey Vulture—Seen wafting around the lower third of the state BOP. Already present in Door and Shawano Counties by 8 March. While seen in Douglas County 16 March (S. and L. LaValley), other returning birds did not appear in Ashland or Florence Counties until 25 March. Smallwood reported 28 from Fort McCoy in Monroe County 11 May. Counts totaling 25 birds came from Crawford, Grant, Jefferson, and Polk Counties between 26 March-12 May.

Osprey—Two observations were made in the western part of the state before the record cut-off date of 16 March: 12 March in Vernon County (Roth-Reynolds) and 15 March in La Crosse County (Jackson). The next reports came from Peczynski in Vilas County 20 March and Zinda in Portage County 22 March (pair of birds). The high count, 7 breeding birds at Collins Marsh in Manitowoc County, was tallied 13 April (Domagalski). Totals of 5–6 birds each came from six other counties. Reported EOP from the southeastern counties of Dodge, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, and Rock.

Mississippi Kite****—It has been twelve years since this species was found during the spring season. Christensen observed one at White River Marsh SWA in Green Lake County 7 May. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records" and "By The Wayside."

Bald Eagle—Found statewide BOP. Stratton carefully counted 332 from the Lake Onalaska observation deck in La Crosse County 10 March. The next day, on a south wind, Brady and Oksiuta counted 146 migrants at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center in Bayfield County. They noted that most were adults in kettles of 4–8 birds. Seen EOP in the southeastern counties of Dane, Dodge, Jefferson, Ozaukee, Waukesha, and Winnebago.

Northern Harrier—Seen in over a dozen southern counties BOP, including 4 over-wintering birds at Buena Vista Grasslands in Portage County 3 March (Oksiuta). Reported north to Ashland County 8 March (Anich). Eleven individuals were counted 31 March over Crex Meadows in Burnett County (S. Spencer).

Sharp-shinned Hawk—Diffusely distributed statewide BOP. Early May produced migrants on the 2nd in Rock County (12 birds, Boone) and 5th in Bayfield County (30 birds, Brady).

Cooper's Hawk—While there were no reports of northbound migrants this season, observers did note courtship flights in middle to late March in Bayfield (Brady) and Dane Counties (Paulios).

Northern Goshawk—Reported during the period in Ashland, Bayfield, Door, Florence, Forest, Iron, Marinette, Oneida, Sawyer, and Vilas Counties. Also seen in outlying counties of Brown 17 March (Janssen) and Portage 31 March-5 May (Pendergast). A northwest bound migrant was reported 21 April in Bayfield (Brady).

Red-shouldered Hawk—BOP in Brown, Chippewa, Iowa, Sauk, Walworth, and Washington Counties. Risch reported an individual 11 March in Taylor County. Seven birds were counted during an official survey 22 April in Trempealeau County (Carlyle). Northernmost reports came from Burnett (30 April, Maercklein), Florence (22 March–19 May, B. and K. Kavanagh), and Vilas (27 April, Keyel) Counties.

Broad-winged Hawk—Thiessen made the first observation 9 April in Dane County. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records." Next reported on the 11th in Green Lake County (Pendergast). Two days later, birds were detected in Columbia County (Keyel) and Dane (m. obs.). On 15 March, two separate groups of 5 individuals were noted in Rock (Cullum) and Waukesha (Szymczak) Counties. There was excellent reporting on migratory kettles this year, with detections of more than 5 birds spanning 22 April-5 May. The largest group numbered at least 150 birds and was seen on Washington Island in Door County 28 April (Edmunds). On 5 May a 125 were seen in Bayfield County (Brady).

Swainson's Hawk****—Facebook communication allowed two different observers to watch the same bird in different locations 19 April as it flew west through the city of Madison in Dane County! Paulios originally spotted the bird and alerted McDowell who saw it as well, see "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records."

Red-tailed Hawk—The only observation that indicated migratory birds came from Pertile, who counted 12 adults, in Sawyer County 24 March.

Rough-legged Hawk—Detected around the state BOP, including at their perennial stronghold, Buena Vista Grasslands, in Portage County (25 birds, Durfee and Krerowicz). Lesser concentrations, 5–10 birds, were noted in Bayfield, Burnett, Marathon, Price, and

Figure 3. Brown Pelican on 8 April 2012 was photographed by Terence Brashear.

Figure 4. Snowy Egret found by Jym Mooney along Dike Road in Horicon Marsh NWR, Dodge County, on 15 April 2012.

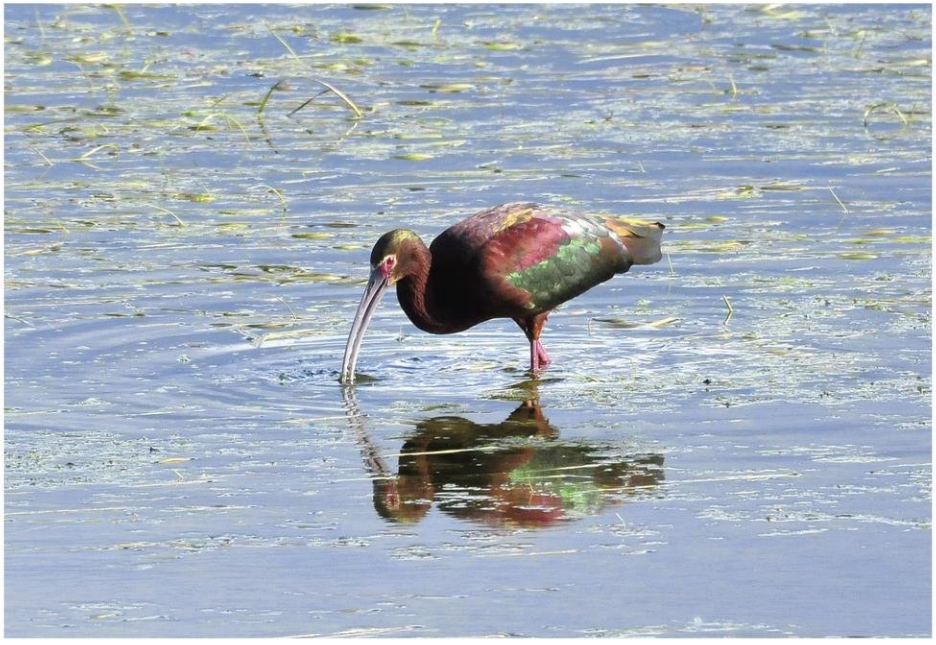

Figure 5. White-faced Ibis in the ponds along Highway 29 east of Green Bay, Brown County, was photographed by Joel Trick on 18 April 2012.

Figure 6. Other White-faced Ibises found in Trempealeau County in a pond along the edge of the town of Trempealeau, near the railroad tracks, in the Upper Mississippi NWR, were photographed by Dan Jackson on 23 April 2012.

Wood Counties between 2–16 March. Final May reports came from Vilas County on the 24th (NLDC), Langlade County the next day (Curnutt), and Portage on the 28th (N. Mueller).

Golden Eagle—Found in the traditional western counties of Ashland, Bayfield, Douglas, Grant, Monroe, Polk, Portage, Richland, Sawyer, Taylor, and Vernon. Of special note were observations in Washington County 13 March (W. Mueller) and Florence County 15 April (J. DeBoer). Seven migrants were reported in Bayfield 11 March (Brady and Oksiuta). Also, last seen in Bayfield 21 April (Brady).

Yellow Rail—Current record cut-off date is 19 April. An individual recorded by Howe in Walworth County 28 March becomes the all-time earliest arrival date. "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records." In addition, he monitored birds at that location until his final report 6 May. Howe noted a maximum of 3 birds, which was also the high count for the season. Other reports came from Green Lake County 8 May (T. Schultz), Marathon County 12 May (Belter), and Burnett County 21–22 May (Skutek and Tessen).

King Rail*—Reported in Dodge County 1 May (Tessen) and again, 11 May (Gustafson and Horn) during the Horicon Marsh bird festival. The 11 May report indicated that a second bird might have been present, however that could not be confirmed.

Virginia Rail—The current record cut-off date is 4 April. The five earlier records span 23–30 March. First observed in Racine County 3 April at Nicholson SWA (Howe). Two birds were found the next day in Dodge (Batterman) and Green Lake (T. Schultz) Counties. Five bird high counts spanning 14 April–14 May originated from Dodge, Green Lake, and Rock Counties. Reported statewide.

Sora—An extraordinarily early year for this species! The current record cut-off date is 1 April, with the only earlier dates being 1, 6, 16, and 29 March. This season, there were reports from five counties on or before the cut-off date. The earliest came from Howe in Walworth County 17 March. Two birds were heard at Vernon Marsh in Waukesha County (Brad Steger) the same day. The next day, Sinkula heard a bird in Kewaunee County and Gustafson heard a bird at the above Walworth location and submitted it to the WSO Records Committee, see "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records." On 24 March, Hoy Audubon members had one respond to a tape at Nicholson SWA in Racine County. Then, on 1 April, Ellis found one at Cherokee Marsh in Dane County. Paulios tallied the high count, 28 birds, at Mud Lake SWA in Dodge County 4 May and 17 birds were found 9 May in Portage County (Schaufenbuel).

Common Gallinule—Initially reported from Columbia County at Schoeneberg Marsh 2 May (m. obs.). Next found at Horicon Marsh NWR in Dodge County 8 May (Benson). Other county reports during the season came from Jefferson (where the high count, 15 birds, was tallied 19 May; Bridge and Stutz), Kenosha, Marquette, Outagamie, Portage, Vernon, Waukesha, and Winnebago. An exceptional report, of 3 birds, originated from Mead SWA in Marathon County 31 May (Belter).

American Coot—Healthy numbers were reported in the southern portion of the state BOP, including 160 present on Pewaukee Lake in Waukesha County 7 March (Szymczak). Birds began to filter into the northern counties by 17 March, when they showed up in Marathon County (Belter) and, later, 21 March in Bayfield County (Anich). Some 3,000 were seen 31 March at the Trempealeau NWR in Trempealeau County (Puchalski) and 2,500 were present on Rock Lake in Jefferson County 26 March (Stutz).

Sandhill Crane—Reported in approximately 10 counties, north to Winnebago (Ziebell) BOP. A cluster of "northwoods" reports came in 10 March from Dunn (P. Campbell), Polk (Maercklein), Shawano (Malliet), and Taylor (Risch) Counties. On 24 March 575 were counted at a single site in Jefferson County (Bridge).

Whooping Crane—Reports were made from the counties of Adams, Dodge, Juneau, Lafayette, Marathon, Marquette, Monroe, Sauk, and, exceptionally, in Sheboygan 14 April (Radloff).

Black-bellied Plover—A rather early bird was watched at Zeloski Marsh 21 April in Jefferson County (m. obs.). Next reported 7 May in

Ozaukee County (Sommer) and 12 May in Dane County (S. Cutright). M. Weber found 11 in Door County 19 May and counts of 8 birds each were noted in Bayfield County, Dane, and Jefferson. Last observed 31 May in Columbia County and Dane. Seen in a minimum of nineteen counties.

American Golden-Plover—The record cut-off date is 5 April. The torrent of earlier reports began with 20 birds photographed in Jefferson County 23 March (Bridge). See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records." Her report becomes the third earliest ever. The next day, additional observations occurred in Columbia (m. obs.) and Dane Counties (m. obs.), as well as, in Sheboygan County (Frank). Pendergast found one 2 April in Portage County and Tessen found 35 in Dodge County 4 April. Also during the record-worthy time period, the high count, 67 birds, was reported in Jefferson (Gustafson) 3 April. Last reported 24 May in Douglas County (Bruhnke) and the next day in Dane (K. DeBoer). Reported in a total of fifteen counties.

Semipalmated Plover—There are currently only two records earlier than the cut-off date of 18 April (13 and 14 April). This year, single birds were found 14 April in Dane County at the County V ponds (A. Holschbach) and the next day in Columbia County (photographed by Yoerger). New reports did not occur until 23 April in Sheboygan County (Schroeder) and then, after another significant time gap, until 1 May in Racine County (Gustafson). Arrived in Bayfield County 3 May (Anich). High totals of 45 birds were reported in Brown County (19 May, Betchkal) and Dane County (27 May, Batterman). Still reported in four counties 31 May.

Piping Plover*—The earliest was seen (and heard!) by Sontag in Manitowoc County 1 May. On 15 May, four pairs and one additional male were found in Ashland County (J. Trick) and an individual was found in Douglas County (S. and L. LaValley). Tessen later reported one in Douglas on the 22nd. The last bird was seen 27 May in Sheboygan County (A. and J. Raddatz).

Killdeer—Plentiful, with BOP detection north to Portage County (Pendergast). Reported in Shawano County 8 March (Merry) and in Bayfield County by 11 March (Brady and Oksiuta). Fifty bird totals were counted in two separate locations in Dane County: County V ponds (Prestby) 2 April and Nine Springs Natural Area 17 May (Huf).

Black-necked Stilt—Reported in five counties. The current record cut-off date is 15 April, with the only earlier report being 11 April 2011. This year, 3 birds found at Horicon Marsh NWR in Dodge County 6 April set the new all-time early record! See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records." Ongoing reports from Horicon continued until 30 April. In addition, 2 birds were found 14 April in Dane County along Schumacher Road (m. obs.). Bridge discovered a pair at the Findlay Road VPA in Jefferson County 3 May (Fig. 7). See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records." T. Wood submitted a report the next day from the same location. Also 4 May, A. Holschbach watched one at Bakken's Pond in Sauk County. The last report was of a pair in Winnebago County 19 May (Ziebell).

American Avocet—The record cut-off date is 18 April, with earlier finds spanning 13–15 April. A new all-time early arrival date was set 12 April in Washington County (Raffel). His photographs were submitted to the WSO Records Committee and accepted. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records." On 14 April, Grgic and Schroeder found 11 at Horicon Marsh NWR in Dodge County. The species was detected at Horicon until 17 May (Longhenry). The next report, of the season's highest number, 37, was made 1 May in Milwaukee County (m. obs.). Those birds were only present for a single day. The fourth, and final, county report came from Bridge and Stutz while at Zeloski Marsh in Jefferson 13 May.

Spotted Sandpiper—Sightings began in LaCrosse County 10 April (Stratton) and continued with Milwaukee County 13 April (W. Mueller) and Dane County 15 April (McDowell). Observations continued in Dane only, until 18 April when one was noted up in Burnett County (Java). On 3 May, 26 were seen at Harrington Beach SP in Ozaukee County (S. Cutright).

Figure 7. Black-necked Stilt discovered on Voluntary Public Access Land in Jefferson County on 3 May 2012 was photographed by Cynthia Bridge.

Figure 8. Ruff with Dunlins at County Highway V and Schmacher Road in Dane County by Tom Prestby on 13 May 2012.

Figure 9. This Ruff with Dunlins was photographed by Cynthia Bridge on 13 May 2012 in the County V Ponds in Dane County.

Figure 10. Laughing Gull was photographed in flight by Dave Freriks on 22 May 2012 off North Point, Sheboygan lake shore, Sheboygan County.

Solitary Sandpiper—The record cut-off date is currently 10 April. Howe's discovery of a bird in Racine County a day earlier marked the first report for the season. Next seen in Waukesha County 12 April (Hahn). In the northern part of the state, K. Kavanagh made her first observation of the season 1 May in Florence County (3 birds). Thirteen were tallied 7 May in Ozaukee County (Setzer). Last observed 25 May in Milwaukee County (Coulter) and on the 27th in Sheboygan County (A. and J. Raddatz).

Greater Yellowlegs—The current record cut-off date is 20 March, with only three earlier dates spanning 5–15 March. Several early birds were noted this season, beginning in Dane County 12 March (Lindemer, see "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records") and continuing with additional March birds on the 17th and 20th in Columbia (Grgic) and Waukesha (Hahn) Counties, respectively. Reported in Marathon County 24 March (Belter) and in Bayfield County 27 March (Brady). Tessen saw 150 in Dane 21 April and 85 were counted in Jefferson County at Zeloski Marsh (m. obs.). The species was still being observed 29–30 May in four counties.

Willet—Just missing the cut-off date of 14 April, were single birds found on the 15th in Dane (Schiffman) and Jefferson Counties (Stutz). The third county report came from Racine 19 April (K. DeBoer). Returning birds were discovered in Marathon County 1 May (Belter) and in Bayfield County 3 May (Anich and Krerowicz). Schroeder counted 41 birds at Fischer Creek in Manitowoc County 1 May and 30 were present in LaCrosse County 30 April (m. obs.). T. Wood logged the final report from Dodge 21 May. Reported in fourteen counties.

Lesser Yellowlegs—The cut-off date for record early observations is 15 March, with only two earlier observations spanning 29 February-5 March. This season, Jackson and Puchalski found the species 10 March in Columbia County, the same day T. Wood made a report from that same county and submitted his findings to the WSO Records Committee. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records." On 13 March, K. DeBoer noted a bird in Racine County. Next observed 17 March in Dane County during a WSO field trip (m. obs.) and, separately, at Nine Springs Natural Area (Jakoubek). The same day Gustafson found one at Big Muskego Lake in Waukesha County. Arrived in Barron County 4 April (Evanson) and in Bayfield County 14 April (Anich). Approximately 300 were present at Zeloski Marsh in Jefferson County 21–22 April (m. obs.). Two hundred were seen 27 April-3 May in Dane County (Evanson and Schilke). Lingered in five counties 30 May.

Upland Sandpiper—First reported in Winnebago County 7 April (Tessen). W. Mueller made the next observation at Six Mile Road in Ozaukee County 11 April. On 14 April, they were reported in Dane County from several locations (m. obs.) and in Portage County (Batterman) at Buena Vista Grasslands. Buena Vista was also the site of the highest number seen, 6 birds (Swelstad), 26 May. Seen in fifteen counties scattered statewide.

Whimbrel—Seen in five counties during the period. The first arriving birds appeared 15 May in Manitowoc County (7 birds, Sontag). Next seen in Sheboygan County 19 May (Brigham). On 19 May Sontag found his highest number, 72 birds, in Manitowoc. It was interesting timing when the season's high count, 76 birds, was reported north in Door County (M. Weber) the next day. On 28 May, 9 were seen in Douglas County (Keyel and Prestby) and 30 May a single bird was seen in Dane County (m. obs.).

Hudsonian Godwit—There are currently four records before 24 April that span 8–22 April. This year, 4 birds were seen at the County V ponds in Dane County 15 April (m. obs.). These Dane County birds also distinguished themselves by being the most found at any one location. On 19 April, Thiessen discovered one at Zeloski Marsh in Jefferson County and submitted his observation to the WSO Records Committee. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records." Next reported by Wanger in Milwaukee County 26 April and in Dodge County 1 May (Tessen and T. Wood). As of 30 May, 2 birds were still being reported at the aforementioned County V ponds (m. obs.). Reported in a total of eight counties.

Marbled Godwit—Like the Hudsonian above, this species was first found 15 April at the County V ponds in Dane County (m. obs.). Next seen in Bayfield County 17 April (Anich

and Brady). The third county reports were made 2 May in Marathon (Belter and Prendergast) and Oneida (Keyel and Prestby). The fifth and final county report came from Eau Claire 4 May (Cameron). Like the Hudsonian above, birds were still present at the County V ponds 30 May (Graham).

Ruddy Turnstone—Sontag spotted 4 birds 8 May in Manitowoc County. The next day Murkowski found one in Sheboygan County. On 11 May, 6 were observed in Kewaunee County (Schilke). Inland reports came from Dane County (Paulios) 15 May and Dodge County 25 May (Bahls). High numbers were tallied in Kewaunee 26 May (82 birds, Schilke) and Douglas County 24 May (58 birds, Bruhnke). Birds remained 31 May in Ashland County (NDLC) and Sheboygan (Grgic). Reported in ten counties.

Red Knot—Was not reported during spring 2011. This year, Anich observed 2 birds in Bayfield County 19–20 May and Lubahn found 3 individuals at Wind Point in Racine County 26 May.

Sanderling—Bridge made the first discovery in Jefferson County 25 April. The next report did not occur until 10 May during a WSO field trip in Sauk County (m. obs.). Petherick counted 5 at the Milwaukee Coast Guard Impoundment 12 May in Milwaukee County and Prestby found one in Oneida County on the 14th at the Rainbow Flowage. Douglas County hosted 130 foraging at Wisconsin Point 28 May (Keyel and Prestby). Other than that report, all totals seen were 25 birds or fewer. Observed 30–31 May in four counties. The number of reporting counties was only fourteen, which continues a weak trend for the species.

Semipalmated Sandpiper—First observed at Nine Springs Natural Area in Dane County 29 April (Nichols). Sightings continued at Nine Springs until 5 May when the species arrived in Grant (Butson), Jefferson (Batterman), and Ozaukee (Curnutt) Counties. Paulios counted 115 at the County V ponds in Dane 31 May. In addition, the species was also seen in Brown, Columbia, Portage, and Sheboygan Counties EOP.

Least Sandpiper—Returned 16 April to Horicon Marsh NWR in Dodge County (Stephenson) and to Dane County (Heikkinen) the next day. The third county report came from Jefferson 21 April (m. obs.). Reported in Eau Claire County 3 May (Betchkal and Cameron) and north to Ashland County on the 10th (Oksiuta). On 14 May, Heikkinen counted 125 in Dane and 80 were seen at Yellowstone Lake SP in Lafayette County 21 May (Willard). Birds were still being found EOP in Ashland, Columbia, Dane, Douglas, and Dunn Counties.

White-rumped Sandpiper—Three birds were found 13 May during a WSO field trip in Dane County (m. obs.) and separately by Tessen in Columbia County. Seen the next day in Sauk County (A. Holschbach) and the day after that in Kewaunee County (Pendergast). Arrived in Bayfield County on the 19th (Brady and Anich). Present in three counties 31 May, including Dane, where Paulios found the season's high count of 30 birds. Found in eighteen counties.

White-rumped Sandpiper × Dunlin—Discovered by Anich at Maslowski Beach in Ashland County 23 May and photographed by Brady the next day on the Bayfield County side. Anich and Brady anticipate submitting an article for publication in the Passenger Pigeon Summer 2013.

Baird's Sandpiper—Definitive arrival date of 2 May when they appeared in Columbia (m. obs.), Jefferson (Bridge), and Milwaukee (Huf) Counties. Seen in Marathon County 19 May (Belter and Hurlburt) and the next day in Bayfield County (Brady and Oksiuta). Seven were counted in Manitowoc County 23 May (Murkowski). Reported 30 May in Columbia, Dane, and Sheboygan Counties. Found during the period in eighteen counties.

Pectoral Sandpiper—The current record cut-off date is 19 March and the all-time early date is 5 March 1986. This year, Domagalski came close to the all-time date with his observation of a bird at Killsnake SWA in Calumet County 9 March. Also early were birds found 15 March in Racine County (K. DeBoer), 17 March in Green County (Evanson), and 18 March in Dodge County (T. Wood). The species reached Chippewa County 7 April (Cameron) but did not make it into Bayfield County (Anich) until 3 May. Totals ranging from 400–850 birds were counted between 8–19 April at Zeloski Marsh in Jefferson County (Bridge and Stutz). Present

Figure 11. Franklin's Gull photographed by Dan Jackson on the Black River in La Crosse, La Crosse County, on 6 March 2012.

Figure 12. White-winged Dove by Jayne Gulbrand on 21 April 2012 in her backyard in Germantown, Washington County.

Figure 13. Another view of the White-winged Dove by Jayne Gulbrand in Washington County on 21 April 2012.

Figure 14. Vermilion Flycatcher in Milwaukee County by Brian Hansen on 29 April 2012.

EOP in Brown, Columbia, Dane, and Sheboygan Counties.

Purple Sandpiper—A bird found by Jesse Peterson in Milwaukee County 19 March is one of only three March departure dates.

Dunlin—The record cut-off date is 2 April and the all-time early date is 19 March 2011. This year Edlhuber and Huf set the new all-time early with their observation in Milwaukee County 17 March. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records." Another early report came from Sheboygan County 25 March (Frank). Birds persisted in that county through the 28th (Grgic and Murkowski). In addition, Tessen reported an arrival in Dane County 31 March. New reports did not occur until 6 April, when more birds were observed in Dane (Thiessen). Migrants arrived in Bayfield County 13 May (Anich). Tessen counted 500 in Dodge County 13 May. Lesser totals of 100–300 were found in Brown, Dane, and Jefferson Counties between 13–23 May. Present EOP in Columbia, Dane, Douglas, Manitowoc, and Sheboygan Counties.

Stilt Sandpiper—The sole county reports came from County V ponds in Dane 3 May (m. obs.), Columbia 13 May (Tessen), Brown 15 May (Pendergast), and Lost Creek Wetland in Portage on the 21st (Schaufenbuel). All reports were of single birds.

Ruff**—A female (Reeve) was seen and photographed (Figures 8 and 9) by many during a WSO field trip to the County V ponds in Dane County 13 May. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records."

Short-billed Dowitcher—Appeared in Grant County 28 April (Yoerger) and Waukesha County 30 April (J. Weber). All high counts occurred 13 May and were in the counties of Jefferson (60 birds, Stutz), Lafayette (25 birds, Nechvatal), and Sheboygan (28 birds, Frank). EOP at Goose Pond in Columbia County (m. obs.). Seen in twenty-six counties.

Long-billed Dowitcher—The current record cut-off date is 25 April with seven earlier arrival dates spanning 12–21 April. This year, a bird present in Jefferson County 15 April (Stutz) would be added to that list. The 9 birds found in Dane County 30 April (Kreitinger), were the most reported during the season and the second report of the species. Last seen 16 May in Dane and La Crosse Counties. Reported in twelve counties.

Dowitcher sp.—Regardless of species, an individual observed by Reimer in Calumet County 8 April is phenomenally early. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records."

Wilson's Snipe—An over-wintering bird was present BOP in Waukesha County (Szymczak). Found by Dixon in Kenosha County 9 March and the next day in Columbia, Dane, and Rock Counties. Risch had a bird return to Taylor County 16 March and Maercklein found one the next day in Polk County.

American Woodcock—First heard in Dane County 6 March (Paulios). Found the next day in Door (R. and C. Lukes), Milwaukee (Schulte), and Ozaukee Counties (Uttech). Returning birds reached Polk County (Maercklein) by 10 March and both Florence (B. and K. Kavanagh) and Douglas (S. and L. LaValley) Counties 14 March.

Wilson's Phalarope—Bridge discovered one 19 April in Jefferson County and the next day another was found in Dane County (m. obs.). The third county report originated from Brown County 30 April (J. and P. Trick). Seen in Calumet and Racine Counties 1–2 May. The high count was 5 birds counted in Calumet 13–19 May (m. obs.). Other than a male seen in Bayfield County 19 May (m. obs.) the northwestern boundary for observations was Chippewa and Eau Claire Counties. The northeastern limit was Brown. Seen EOP in Columbia County, Dane, and Brown Counties.

Red-necked Phalarope—Reported in seven counties, with the first being found in Fond du Lac 12 May (Evanson). The next report was of a female in Bayfield County 20 May (Brady). Last seen 30 May in Columbia County at Goose Pond (m. obs.). Other county reports came from Dane, Marathon, Sheboygan, and Vilas. All seasonal reports were of single birds.

Bonaparte's Gull—Found in Jefferson (Stutz) and Ozaukee (S. Cutright) Counties 16 March. The next day T. Schultz counted 16 birds in Green Lake County and Tessen noted

their presence in Dodge County. Krerowicz made an unusual discovery of a bird in Bayfield County 31 March. Subsequent reports from that county did not occur again until 18 April. On 23 April, S. Cutright tallied a staggering 2,673 in Ozaukee. In addition, Ziebell counted 1,420 in Winnebago County 20 April and Petherick counted 1,000 at Doctor's Park in Milwaukee County 21 April.

Little Gull*—Last reported during spring of 2010. This year, the only report was of a juvenile found by Keyel and Prestby at Wisconsin Point in Douglas County 28 May.

Laughing Gull*—First reported in Sheboygan County 19 May (Murkowski). This bird remained until the 22nd (m. obs.). Although not mandatory, Freriks documented (Fig. 10) this bird on the 22nd and submitted it to the WSO Records Committee. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records." Next, Keyel found an adult at Wind Point in Racine County 24 May. The third county report was of an adult at Wisconsin Point in Douglas 28 May (Keyel and Prestby).

Franklin's Gull—There are four records before the cut-off date of 26 March, with 8 March 1992 being the current all-time early date. A new record was set when an adult in breeding plumage was seen on the 6th by Jackson (Fig. 11) in La Crosse County. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records." Individuals seen 24 March in St. Croix County (Persico) and 25 March in Ozaukee County (S. Cutright) were also early. After these record-worthy observations, the fourth county report came from Green Lake 11 April (Pendergast). The fifth county, Bayfield, also lodged the high count (16 birds) 14 April (Anich). Last found in Kewaunee County 30 May (Pendergast and Schaufenbuel). Reported in eleven counties.

Thayer's Gull—BOP in Douglas, Jefferson, Milwaukee, Racine, Waukesha, and Winnebago Counties. Counts of 2 birds each were reported from Douglas, Kewaunee, Milwaukee, and Racine Counties and spanned 3 March-29 April. Last seen 5 May at Doctor's Park in Milwaukee and at Virmond Park in Ozaukee County on the 8th (both Frank).

Iceland Gull*—BOP in Douglas, Jefferson, Kewaunee, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, and Winnebago Counties. Keyel and Prestby reported 2 birds, one adult and one juvenile, 3 March from the Superior Landfill in Douglas. The two final reports of the season each came from Ozaukee County: 24 April at Harrington Beach SP (S. Cutright) and 8 May at Virmond Park (Frank).

Lesser Black-backed Gull*—BOP in Jefferson, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Waukesha, and Winnebago Counties. Although uncommon, an adult appeared in Douglas County 24 March (Svingen). Five individuals were found at the Des Plaines River in Kenosha County 3 April (Rosenstiel). Last seen 8 May in Milwaukee at McKinley Marina (Gustafson and Horn) and the next day in the aforementioned Kenosha County location (Rosenstiel).

Glaucous Gull—BOP in Douglas, Fond du Lac, Jefferson, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Sheboygan, and Winnebago Counties. Tessen tallied 25 birds 2 March in Winnebago and Svingen counted 17 individuals at Allouez Bay in Douglas County 28 March. Last seen in Douglas 11 May (S. and L. LaValley) and in Milwaukee 17 May (Mattrisch).

Great Black-backed Gull—BOP in Douglas, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Sheboygan, and Winnebago Counties. On 6 March, T. and B. Kocourek counted 6 individuals at Manitowoc Harbor in Manitowoc County. Last reported from North Point in Sheboygan 31 May (Swelstad).

Caspian Tern—The record cut-off date is 4 April, with two earlier dates occurring in March. Sontag found one bird in Manitowoc County 2 April. The second report came 4 April in Racine County (Pugh). The third county to report was Milwaukee the next day (m. obs.). Appeared in Bayfield County 29 April (Brady and Oksiuta). Some 125 birds were reported in Kewaunee County 18 May (Glueckert) and 96 were seen 29 May in Door County (Boone). Observed 30–31 May in Dane (Henrikson and White), Door, and Kewaunee Counties. The Dane County observation is unusual because the bird was not detected there during the atlas, 1995–2000.

Black Tern—Reports began 28 April in Green Lake (WSO field trip participants) and

Figure 15. Scissor-tailed Flycatcher seen in Waupaca County on 8 May 2012 by Dan Belter.

Figure 16. Louisiana Waterthrush showed early in Nelson Dewey State Park in Grant County, 1 April 2012, and was photographed by Cynthia Bridge.

Marquette (Tessen) Counties. The next counties to report were Columbia (m. obs.) and Jefferson (Bridge) 2 May. Ziebell tallied 82 birds in Winnebago County 19 May and Persico counted 80 at Crex Meadows in Burnett County 25 May. The highest number reported at Horicon Marsh NWR in Dodge County was 65 birds 14 May (Paulios). Scattered around thirty counties statewide.

Common Tern—Ziebell noted the first arrival in Winnebago County 15 April. Found at North Point in Racine County 20 April (J. and K. DeBoer) and all the way up in Marinette County the next day (J. Campbell). Interesting observations were made in the "northwoods" away from the Great Lakes 30 April in Oneida County (Anich), 8 May in Taylor County (Risch), and 9 May in Vilas County (David). Some 750 individuals were counted 18 May in Kewaunee County (Glueckert) and 400 were seen 19 May in Door County (M. Weber). Present at or near EOP in Ashland, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, and Sheboygan, which were either confirmed as breeding locations during the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas field work or directly adjacent to said counties.

Forster's Tern—Initially reported 4 April at Big Muskego Lake in Waukesha County (Gustafson) and two days later in Dodge County (Pecquex). The third county report came 9 April from Marquette (Schneider). Seen in Oconto County 19 April (K. Kavanagh) and in Ashland and Bayfield Counties 2 May (both Krerowicz). Totals of 150 birds were reported 11–15 May in Kewaunee County (Pendergast) and Waukesha (Zuhlke). EOP in Ashland, Manitowoc, and Sheboygan Counties.

Parasitic Jaeger*—All reports came from Douglas County in late May. Tessen indicated that an individual was present on the 21st-22nd. Jackson specified that he saw an adult light morph on the 26th and Keyel and Prestby noted two adults on the 29th.

Eurasian Collared-Dove*—Found in the counties of Columbia, Crawford, Grant, Iowa, La Crosse, Milwaukee, Monroe, Rock, Sheboygan, and notably, where they have been consistently seen over the past two years, in Manitowoc (Domagalski). The highest total seen was 13 birds 26 March in Crawford (Stark).

White-winged Dove*—A bird was photographed in Washington County (Figures 12 and 13) 19 April (Gulbrand) and another was documented in Milwaukee County 3 May (Ackerman). See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records."

Yellow-billed Cuckoo—Arrivals spanning three successive days began 3 May in Iowa County (A. Holschbach), followed by Rock County (Cullum), and Grant County (Keyel). By 19 May, the species reached Polk County (Maercklein) and the northwest extent of its distribution. The next day Swelstad made an observation in Marinette County, which represented the most northeast sighting. Schilke counted 6 in Sauk County 23 May.

Black-billed Cuckoo—Noted 1 May at Arena Boat Landing in Iowa County (A. Holschbach). Seen the next day in Milwaukee (m. obs.) and Sauk (McDonald) Counties. Reached Douglas County 12 May (S. and L. LaValley). Detected 15 May in both Bayfield (Oksiuta) and Florence (K. Kavanagh) Counties. Prestby counted 6 in Douglas County 30 May.

Eastern Screech-Owl—The most detected were 3 in Waukesha County (Brad Steger) 17 March and 2 in Milwaukee County (Korducki) 19 May. Found north to Door, Dunn, Outagamie, and Portage Counties.

Snowy Owl—An excellent season, with the species being found in twenty counties. A high number of 10 birds was present in the Oconto Harbor in southeastern Oconto County (m. obs.) in March. May observations occurred in the following counties: 5th in Douglas (Seeger) and on the 9th in Marathon County (Belter), where a bird was present until the 20th (Hurlburt).

Great Gray Owl*—Seen in Douglas County 18 May (Keyel) and approved by the WSO Records Committee. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records" and "By the Wayside."

Long-eared Owl—Seven counties were the source of reports: Ashland (7 and 18 May, Anich and Brady), Douglas (30 March-2 April, S. and L. LaValley), Green (11 April, Yoerger), Marquette (14 March, Dadisman), Portage (3

March, Pendergast), Washburn (10 May, Keyel), and Washington (15 April, Jaeger). All reports were of single birds.

Short-eared Owl—Reported in Adams, Dane, Douglas, La Crosse, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Outagamie, Ozaukee, Portage, Sheboygan, Taylor, Vernon, and Winnebago Counties. Counts of 11 birds were reported 14 April in Adams at Leola Marsh (Batterman) and 13 March in Portage at Buena Vista Grasslands (m. obs.). The last observations occurred 22 and 25 May in Portage (Sinkula) and Vernon (Rueckheim) Counties, respectively.

Northern Saw-whet Owl—A total of 8 were tallied in Douglas County 30 March (S. and L. LaValley). Counts of 2 individuals were made 24 March in Lincoln County (Uttech) and 11 April in Sawyer County (Prestby). No reports were made from the southeast quadrant of the state, with all observations specifically made north of a line drawn between Grant and Outagamie Counties. Reported in a total of twenty counties.

Common Nighthawk—A "scout" bird was seen up in Chippewa County 25 April (Retherford). Observed 3 May in Dane (at two locations; Liss and Witynski) and Monroe (Epstein) Counties. Found the next day in Jefferson and Waukesha Counties. By 12 May, one individual had reached Bayfield County (Oksiuta). Pendergast counted 20 birds flying above Lake Dubay in Portage County 28 May. All other counts were of 8 birds or fewer. Sightings were still occurring 29–31 May in Bayfield, Douglas, Grant, La Crosse, Outagamie, Sheboygan, and Vernon Counties.

Chuck-will's-widow**—Now annual in Jackson County, Otto found the first 9 May. An exceptional find occurred in Walworth County 19 May when the team of Bridge and Stutz heard one during their Big Day. Both of the above observations were documented, submitted to the WSO Records Committee, and approved. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records."

Eastern Whip-poor-will—Initially heard 14 April in Outagamie County (Woloszyn). Heard two days later in Iowa County (Mack). On 8 April, new reports came from Dane, Green Lake, Kenosha, and Racine Counties. K. Kavanagh found her first 22 April in Florence County. Over a total of nine miles of driving, 23 birds were tallied in Marinette County 31 May (B. and K. Kavanagh). Counts of 10–12 birds were reported in Bayfield, Jefferson, and Oneida Counties over the period 19–31 May.

Chimney Swift—First seen 8 April in Waukesha County (Zuhlke) and in Portage County 14 April (Wetzel). Incursion into the "northwoods" began 26 April when an individual was seen in Marathon County. Appeared in Eau Claire County 29 April (Betchkal) and in Ashland County 2 May (Krerowicz). The largest concentration was present in Marathon, where Belter counted 150 birds 23 May.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird—Ouren found the first bird 27 April in Grant County, with new county reports coming from Racine (Howe) and Vernon (Jackson) 1 May. Seen in four new counties the next day. Arrived north to Clark, Dunn, and Marathon Counties by 3 May. Peczynski found his first in Vilas County 6 May. High counts are difficult to discuss in this forum because most observations are at feeders where unmarked birds return frequently and are most likely double-counted.

Belted Kingfisher—Present in the southern tier of counties BOP, with the exception of Sawyer (Keyel and Prestby) and Waupaca (Selke).

Red-headed Woodpecker—In addition to an over-wintering adult bird in Sawyer County (Pertile), BOP reports were made from Dunn, Iowa, Portage, and Sauk Counties. An adult was noted in Bayfield County 6 April (Oksiuta). Longhenry found 8 birds at Necedah NWR in Juneau County 25 March and 6 birds were seen during a WSO convention field trip to Iowa County 10 May. Reported to the northeast in Marinette and Oneida Counties.

Red-bellied Woodpecker—Observed north to Bayfield, Douglas, Florence, and Oneida Counties during the period.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker—Present BOP in Grant (Mathias), Milwaukee (Wilson), and Waukesha (Horn) Counties. Next found 10 March in Iowa County. Arrived in Florence County 22 March (K. Kavanagh), Barron County 30 March (Jerome), and Ashland

County 1 April (Sharp). Brady tallied 40 resident birds while conducting his Red-shouldered Hawk survey in Ashland 27 April. Hagner counted 12 migrating birds at Estabrook Park in Milwaukee 7 April.

Black-backed Woodpecker—The efforts of boreal survey team members Anich, Brady, Keyel, Paulios, and Prestby produced reports in Ashland, Douglas, Florence, Forest, Iron, Oneida, Price, Sawyer, and Vilas Counties. The highest number detected was 3 birds (1 male, 2 females) in Iron 27 April (Anich).

Northern Flicker—Present in over a dozen counties BOP. Many of those were probably over-wintering birds; however, a report from Polk County (Maercklein) 7 March may have been of a migrant because it was noted as "first of year" by the observer. Not long afterwards, K. Kavanagh noted her first in Florence County 15 March. Huf counted 16 migrants at Schlitz Audubon Nature Center in Milwaukee County 16 March and S. Peterson noted 30 migrants in Door County at Peninsula SP 3 April.

Pileated Woodpecker—Statewide, with a southeastern report in Milwaukee County 6 April (Hunter) and again 5 May (Frank). Not reported in Kenosha or Racine Counties.

American Kestrel—The only double-digit counts originated from Burnett County 26 April (15 birds, Paulios), Manitowoc County 13 March (22 birds, Domagalski), and Racine County 18 April (22 birds, Hoy Audubon). The Racine report is interesting because these birds were found atop shrubs and trees in a relatively confined geographic area at Cliffside Park.

Merlin—Early season reports came from Waukesha County 8 March (Sutton) and Bayfield (Anich), Florence (K. Kavanagh), and La Crosse (Puchalski) Counties 10 March. Unfortunately, all seasonal observations were of only one or two birds, so no judgment can be made about when migrants appeared in the state. DeRubeis reported a nesting pair in Portage County 17 April. The final report came from Manitowoc County 31 May (Sontag).

Peregrine Falcon—Greg Septon writes an outstanding annual nesting season report for this species. Put this address into your browser to read all about the 2012 happenings—http://www.we-energies.com/environmental/2012PEFA_finalrpt.pdf

Olive-sided Flycatcher—Decisive arrival 6 May when seen in Dane (Fallow), Grant (Ouren), and Lafayette (Yoerger) Counties. Arrived in Polk County 12 May (Maercklein), the same day the high count, 3 birds, was noted upon first arrival in Forest County (Huset). Last reported 29 May in Manitowoc County (Pecquex). Seen in twenty-nine counties.

Eastern Wood-Pewee—Appeared 2 May in Marinette (Swelstad) and Milwaukee (Bontly and Huf) Counties. Present in seven additional counties the following day. "Northwoods" county arrival followed this timeline: 7th in Polk (Maercklein), 13th in Sawyer (Pertile), 17th in Ashland (Anich), and the 21st in Vilas (Prestby). Persico counted 25 at Crex Meadows in Burnett County 25 May.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher—First reported in La Crosse County (Whitemarsh) 3 May and next in Milwaukee County 8 May (Dembroski). After another brief time gap, the third county report came from Dane (Grover and Liss) on the 12th. Appeared in Ashland (Prestby) and Sawyer (Keyel) Counties 15 May. This was another species whose numbers benefited from intensive, thorough surveying. A boreal survey on the 31st of the Belden Swamp in Douglas County yielded 29 birds (Prestby). Lesser numbers were found in Iron County (13 birds, Brady) on the 30th and in both Ashland (10 birds, Anich) and Bayfield Counties (10 birds, Anich) on the 31st and 27th, respectively. The final southern report was made on the 30th in Milwaukee (Zehner) County.

Acadian Flycatcher—Just missing the record early date of 2 May were reports on the 3rd in Green Lake (T. Schultz), Rock (Yoerger), and Vernon (Roth-Reynolds) Counties. This year, the most northern reports were consistent with normal annual distribution and came from Manitowoc (31st, Domagalski) and Winnebago Counties (19th, Ziebell) in the east along with Pepin County (19th, Paulios) in the west. As usual, high counts came from Wyalusing SP in Grant County (as many as 10 birds) and the Southern Kettle Moraine in Waukesha County (as many as 7 birds).

Alder Flycatcher—In nearly every recent year, the species has arrived on northern county territories prior to detection in the southern tier of counties. This year, the species was present in Florence County as early as 4 May (K. Kavanagh) and found south in Sheboygan County (A. and J. Raddatz) 7 May. Reported north to Douglas County 11 May (S. and L. LaValley). New counties were added the following day, when the species appeared in Dane, Manitowoc, Sauk, and Trempealeau. M. Anderson counted 20 while canoeing at Mud Lake SWA in Door County 22 May. A total of 12 were found in both Bayfield and Douglas Counties EOP.

Willow Flycatcher—The current record cut-off date is 2 May, with only four earlier dates, all occurring in April. This year, the species appeared in the following four counties on the record cut-off date: Dane (Herb), Iowa (A. Holschbach), Marinette (Hurst), and Rock (Boone). Other than the aforementioned Marinette report, only a 13 May report from Marathon County (Hoeft) was noteworthy. New arrivals into the remaining northern tier of counties did not occur until the 21st when Betchkal found one in Eau Claire. Found in its northernmost location, Burnett County, on the 25th (Persico). The northeastern county limit was Oconto. High counts of 12 birds were noted in Dane (Ellis) and Waukesha (Hahn) Counties EOP.

Least Flycatcher—The four record early sightings before the cut-off date of 20 April span 10–15 April. S. Peterson heard one all the way north to Peninsula SP in Door County 19 April! Next found at Lake Park in Milwaukee County 30 April (Sparks). By 2 May, there were over a dozen new county reports. Schaufenbuel counted 21 in Portage County 9 May.

Eastern Phoebe—There are five record dates that are earlier than the current 11 March cut-off date, all occurring before 8 March. This year, multi-county arrival occurred in Dane (two separate locations; Martin and Schilke), Polk (Maercklein), and Walworth (Howe) 10 March. New "northwoods" observations began 14 March in Door County and 16 March in Dunn and Eau Claire Counties. Arrived in Bayfield County 18 March (Brady).

Vermilion Flycatcher**—There are only six state records of this southwestern rarity. The record early date had been 9 May. A true "one day wonder" appeared at Lake Park in Milwaukee County 29 April and was documented (Fig. 14) by three observers. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records."

Great Crested Flycatcher—Two birds were found in the western county of Trempealeau 22 April (Puchalski). Not reported again until 30 April from Rock County (Cullum). Seen the next day in Dane (Evanson), Milwaukee (Sparks), and Racine (Howe) Counties. Noted in Marinette County 3 May (J. Campbell) and the next day in Burnett County (McInroy). A count of 12 migrants was made on the incredible fallout day of 2 May at Hoyt Park in Dane County (La Puma and Lesak).

Eastern Kingbird—Initially observed at Lake Park in Milwaukee County 30 April (Hahn and Sparks). Seen the next day in Dane (m. obs.) and Manitowoc Counties (J. Holschbach). Rapidly returned to more northern territories with arrival in Marinette County (Swelstad) 2 May, Taylor County the next day (Risch), Chippewa and Dunn Counties 4 May, and finally, Bayfield County 10 May (Oksiuta). Pendergast counted 15 while walking a bike trail at Mead SWA in Marathon County EOP.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**—J. Schultz found and photographed an individual in Waupaca County 5 May. His observation, as well as those of three other birdwatchers (Fig. 15), were submitted to the WSO Records Committee and approved. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records." This bird remained until 8 May.

Northern Shrike—Present statewide BOP. The highest number seen was 3 birds, in both Burnett (Haseleu) and Jefferson (Thiessen) Counties. Reports in the early half of April came from Ashland, Dane, Oneida, Portage, and Waushara Counties. The last observation came from Sauk County 21 April (Schwarz). Schwarz admitted having an imperfect view and not being able to identify with 100% certainty. However, the next day, McDonald searched the area and was able to both confirm and photograph the bird.

White-eyed Vireo*—Migrants were noted 5 and 6 May in Dane (Stutz) and Milwaukee (Lubahn) Counties, respectively. First found on

their normal territory at Albany SWA in Green County (m. obs.) 23 May. Two different birds were present.

Bell's Vireo*—First reported in Dane County 7 May (Kreitinger). WSO convention goers found 1 bird at Governor Dodge SP in Iowa County 10 May. Up to 2 individuals were seen at Governor Dodge through 28 May. Also detected in Iowa County at Arena Boating Landing (A. Hoschbach) and Mounds View Grassland (m. obs.). The high counts were 3 birds at Mazomanie SWA in Dane (13 May, Fraker) County and 4 birds at Holland Sand Prairie SNA in La Crosse County (23 May, Puchalski). Other county reports came from Crawford (Duerksen), Dunn (Polk), and Jefferson (m. obs.) Counties.

Yellow-throated Vireo—Dadisman found a returning bird 27 April up in Burnett County. Howe made the next observation in Walworth County 29 April. Reported from Dane and Rock Counties 1 May and north to Florence (K. Kavanagh), Forest (Prestby), and Marathon (Hoeft) Counties on the 5th. Anich saw the first birds in Bayfield and Douglas Counties 19 and 16 May, respectively. On the fallout day of 2 May, 5 birds were counted at Pheasant Branch Conservancy in Dane (m. obs.).

Blue-headed Vireo—Found 19 April in the Southern Kettle Moraine of Waukesha County (Szymczak) and the next day in Dane (Nichols) and Racine (Howe) Counties. Made an impressive push into the "northwoods" counties beginning 22 April when 2 appeared in Jackson (Kaberle), and continuing into Florence (K. Kavanagh) 24 April, and Oneida 28 April (Prestby). First found in Ashland County 4 May (Brady). Four migrating birds were counted 2 May at Hoyt Park in Dane (La Puma and Lesak). Southern EOP in Waukesha (Szymczak).

Warbling Vireo—The only earlier sightings before the current record cut-off date of 24 April are two observations 17 April and one 19 April. This year, Fallow observed a bird in Dane County on the 20th. Another was found in Dane on the 23rd (Henrikson) and in Jefferson (Etter Hale) the next day. Then, every subsequent observation (there were many) continued to come from Dane until 27 April, when seen in Crawford, Dodge, Dunn, Manitowoc, and Racine Counties. Arrived in Florence (K. Kavanagh) and Oneida (Nemec) Counties 5 May.

Philadelphia Vireo—Not surprisingly, the species first appeared 2 May in Dane County (La Puma and Lesak). Seen the next day at two additional Dane locations, as well as, in Jefferson (Stutz) and Washington (Schaefer) Counties. Reports were scant, with the high count being 3 birds seen at Lake Park (9 May, Goodman) and Estabrook Park (12 May, Wilson), both in Milwaukee County. Last reported in Door County 25 May (Boone). Seen in twenty-six counties, the most northwest of which was Sawyer (Pertile).

Red-eyed Vireo—Initially discovered 1 May in Dane County at Picnic Point by E. Wood. Seen the next day at five (!) new Dane locations, as well as, in Fond du Lac, Marinette, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, and Rock Counties. Found in Burnett County 5 May (McInroy), Florence County by the 8th (K. Kavanagh), but not until the 16th in both Ashland (Keyel) and Bayfield Counties (Moulton).

Gray Jay—The "boreal survey studs" (team members previously noted for their work on Spruce Grouse, Black-backed Woodpecker, and Yellow-bellied Flycatchers) yielded impressive results in terms of distribution and numbers for this species. Observations came from Ashland, Bayfield, Douglas, Florence, Forest, Iron, Oneida, Price, Sawyer, and Vilas Counties; often from multiple locations within those counties. The most noteworthy totals were of 7 birds in both Ashland (a pair with 3 young, plus, a second pair; Anich) and Iron (Brady) Counties EOP.

Blue Jay—Unlike 2011, the species did not appear to have a widely noticed mass migration. However, Brady observed 250 migrating at Bark Point (a migrant trap peninsula on Lake Superior) in Bayfield County 17 May.

Common Raven—Normal distribution, other than a 29 March report from Dane County (Petzold), with the following counties representing the southern range limits for the species this year: Buffalo (Betchkal), Dunn (P. Campbell), and Manitowoc (J. Holschbach).

Horned Lark—Reported north to Sawyer (Keyel and Prestby), Shawano (Swelstad), and

Taylor (Cameron) Counties BOP. Domagalski tallied 111 at Collin's Marsh in Manitowoc County BOP. Counts of 100 birds were also noted BOP in Dane (Huf) and Jefferson (Stutz) Counties.

Purple Martin—First observed in Jefferson County 31 March (Hierbaum). Next seen 4 April in Green Lake County (Tessen). On 6 April, migrants appeared in Dane (three locations, m. obs.), Langlade (Richmond), and Waukesha (Szymczak) Counties. Seen at Spirit Lake in Burnett County 8 April (Java), Marathon County 21 April (Belter), and finally, in Bayfield County 24 May (Brady). High count was 40 birds seen 1 May in Marathon (Belter) County. A total of 35 were counted during a Big Sit at Horicon Marsh NWR in Dodge County 13 May (Ellis and Schaefer). In the northeastern part of the state, not reported north of Langlade County.

Tree Swallow—The current record cut-off date is 7 March. Thiessen observed a bird on that date in Dane County. Additional county reports began 11 March in Dodge (m. obs.), Portage (Zinda), and Sauk (Mack) Counties. Their movement continued north 13 March into Marathon County (Hoeft). By 14 March, 130 were already swirling over Tichigan SWA in Racine County (K. DeBoer and Dettwiler). By the first week of April migrants had reached Ashland, Bayfield, and Florence Counties. A cool, windy 5 April concentrated 1,000 birds over Vernon Marsh in Waukesha County (J. Weber).

Northern Rough-winged Swallow—The record cut-off date is 2 April, with the only earlier date being 19 March 2002. McDowell submitted his 31 March observation in Dane County to the WSO Records Committee and it was accepted. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records." Next seen on the cut-off date in Milwaukee County (Frank). While present in Florence County (K. Kavanagh) 20 April, the species did not reach Bayfield County (or any other extreme northwestern county) until 10 May. Members of the Hoy Audubon counted 80 at Wind Point in Racine County 4 May. Sixty-bird totals were found in both Dane (2 May, Lindmer) and Sauk (27 April, Betchkal) Counties.

Bank Swallow—Seen by Roth-Reynolds in Vernon County 11 April and two days later in Dane (McDowell) and Sauk (A. Holschbach) Counties. Reached Eau Claire (Koch) and Marathon (Belter) Counties 28 April. Finally seen in Florence County (K. Kavanagh) 14 May and in Bayfield County 20 May (m. obs.). Huf counted 100 birds 13 May at the colony along Sheridan Drive in Milwaukee County.

Cliff Swallow—The record cut-off date is 8 April. The four earlier records fall 31 March and 2, 4, and 6 April. This year, A. Holschbach discovered one over Bakken's Pond in Sauk County 6 April. All reports continued to be from Bakken's Pond until 14 April when birds appeared in Dunn (Freyberger) and La Crosse (m. obs.) Counties. Seen in Marathon and Portage Counties the next day. It wasn't until 29 April that they showed up in Bayfield County (m. obs.). Pendergast counted 450 birds 18 May in Portage County. Two hundred bird counts were tallied in La Crosse, Marathon, and Vernon Counties between 6 and 19 May.

Barn Swallow—The record cut-off date is 1 April. Eight earlier dates span 13–27 March. This year, one bird was seen along the Yahara River in Dane County (Thiessen) 31 March and 2 birds were discovered the same day in Racine County (Hoy Audubon). Found in Grant and Rock Counties the next day. Pertile saw a returning bird in Sawyer County 7 April and B. and K. Kavanagh observed their first 18 April in Florence County. One hundred were counted 11 May in Sauk County (S. Cutright and Setzer). Etter Hale noted 80 in Jefferson County over Rock Lake on a cool and rainy 28 April.

Boreal Chickadee—The highest concentrations were reported in Forest (8 birds at two separate locations, Prestby) and Oneida (9 birds, Keyel) Counties. Also detected in Ashland, Florence, Iron, and Vilas Counties.

Tufted Titmouse—This species' stronghold is in the southwestern portion of the state where Puchalski regularly found 15–20 at the Hixon Forest in La Crosse County early April. Range limits were northwest to Barron (Evanson) and Burnett (Skutek) Counties, northeast to Marathon (m. obs.) and Shawano (Richmond) Counties, and along Lake Michigan in the counties of Milwaukee (m. obs.), Ozaukee

(Sommer), Racine (m. obs.), and Sheboygan (m. obs.).

Red-breasted Nuthatch—Present around the state BOP and south to Waukesha County EOP (m. obs.). All high counts came from locations where the species is a known breeder.

Brown Creeper—Present around the state BOP. A burst of 15 migrants was detected in the "northwoods" of Forest County 21 March (Prestby). Then, Sommer counted 17 birds at the Lion's Den in Ozaukee County 24 March. The highest number of migrants, 25 birds, was counted 6 April in Milwaukee County (Huf). Only reported EOP from counties where breeding has been previously established.

House Wren—Found in Milwaukee County 1 April (Spencer). The next reports came from Eau Claire County 3 April (Lind) and Manitowoc and Winnebago Counties several days later. Singing males were present in Oconto County 19 April (Rickaby), Taylor County 20 April (Risch), and Polk County 26 April (Jeff Peterson). Noted up in Ashland County 3 May (Anich).

Winter Wren—BOP in Waukesha County (Szymczak). Found in La Crosse County 9 March (Puchalski) and in Ozaukee County 14 March (Bontly and Zehner). Observed in Dane and Manitowoc Counties 15 March and singing on territory in Forest County (Keyel) the next day. Brady had already counted 13 birds in Ashland County by the 29th of March. A report of 4 birds (Barrientos) in Milwaukee County 29 May was interesting.

Sedge Wren—A bird was found in Trempealeau County (Stephenson) on the current record cut-off date of 15 April. Seen 17 April in Dodge County (Schneider) and the following day in Green Lake County (T. Schultz). Arrived in Burnett County 26 April (Paulios) and in Vilas County 2 May (David). Some 188 were tallied during a May Day count 19 May in Winnebago County (Ziebell). Lesser numbers were found by Persico at Crex Meadows (25 birds) in Burnett County 25 May and 14 May in Wood County (22 birds, Brady).

Marsh Wren—Discovered 18 April in Waukesha County at Vernon Marsh (Gustafson). Next seen in Dodge County (m. obs.) 22 April and on the 24th in Kenosha County. Reached Marathon County 27 April (Belter), however ongoing northern advancement did not appear to continue until Marinette County (J. Campbell) 12 May or Douglas County on the 16th (Prestby). Not surprising, the high count, 33 birds, was noted at Horicon Marsh NWR in Dodge EOP (Heikkinen). Twenty-bird totals were reported in both Dane County and Waukesha at specific geographic sites during the period.

Carolina Wren*—The only BOP reports came from two locations in Walworth County (Howe and Nowak). In late March, new reports originated from Crawford (Bridge) and Dane (Schwarz) Counties. Additionally reported during the season from Dodge, Grant, Iowa, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Rock, Sauk, and Trempealeau Counties. No more than 2 birds were reported from any single location.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher—The current record cut-off date is 8 April. Three earlier dates were set 4 and 5 April, as well as, the all-time early date of 30 March 1998. Bateman and La Puma found a single bird 3 April in Dane County. Next detected 7 April in La Crosse (Puchalski) and 9 April in Waukesha County (Gustafson). Reached Marinette County 21 April (m. obs.). New "northwoods" arrival dates occurred 1, 5, and 7 May in Clark (Lund), Eau Claire (m. obs.), and Sawyer (Keyel) Counties, respectively. The northeastern limits were Marathon and Oconto Counties. A whopping 35 were found during the fallout of 2 May in Dane (La Puma and Lesak) at Hoyt Park and Korducki counted 25 birds at Lake Park in Milwaukee County two days later.

Golden-crowned Kinglet—Reported BOP in Ashland, Douglas, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Oconto, and Waukesha Counties. Dixon counted 43 migrating through his Kenosha yard 1 April and 30 were found 17 March in Door County (S. Peterson). Present EOP in expected northern counties, as well as in Waukesha (Szymczak) County.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet—Just missing the record cut-off date of 20 March were initial observations in Dane (Henrikson) and Milwaukee Counties (Bontly) made the next day, 21 March. The third county report came from Ozaukee 24 March (Sommer). Seen 1 April in Florence (B.

and K. Kavanagh) and Polk (Maercklein) Counties. Graham counted 100 at Pheasant Branch Conservancy in Dane County 20 April. There were no out-of-the-ordinary EOP reports.

Eastern Bluebird—BOP in at least a dozen counties, north to Outagamie (m. obs.) and Polk (Maercklein). Found in Forest County (Paulios) 13 March and Bayfield County (Oksiuta) the next day.

Townsend's Solitaire*—Absent from the reports this year.

Veery—A returning bird was seen in Jefferson County 26 April (Szymczak). Next reported in La Crosse County (Puchalski) 29 April. New counties were added during the 2 May fallout day in Dane (multiple locations; m. obs.), Dodge (Bahls), and Milwaukee (m. obs.) Counties. Reached Dunn County (Cameron) 4 May and Bayfield County (Anich) 12 May.

Gray-cheeked Thrush—Discovered at three separate Dane County (m. obs.) locations during 2 May fallout, as well as in Sauk County (McDonald). Seen the next day in Green Lake (T. Schultz) and Milwaukee (Snider) Counties. While this species never seems to be found in abundance, there were two reports of 3 birds each, in Milwaukee (O'Connor) and Racine Counties (K. DeBoer) 12 May. The only observations from the northern half of the state came from Marathon (Belter) and Douglas (Keyel) Counties on the 12th and 18th of May, respectively. Detected in only seventeen counties.

Swainson's Thrush—First observed 20 April in Milwaukee County (Szymczak) and two days later in Ozaukee County (Sommer). The only other April county report was made on the 26th from Dodge (Schaefer). Reached Door County 4 May and further north to Forest on the 7th (Keyel). Migrants did not reach the northwestern counties of Sawyer (Prestby) until 16 May or Bayfield (Brady) until the next day. The pinnacle of their migration was easy to notice because all four of the highest counts occurred 12 May. The most, 15 birds, were found in Dane County (Witynski). Zehner found a lingering bird in Milwaukee 29 May.

Hermit Thrush—Birds that most likely over-wintered were present BOP in Dane (Liss) and Waukesha (Szymczak) Counties. Next reported 14 March in Milwaukee County (K. DeBoer and Dettwiler). Migrants arrived in the northern tier of counties early with detection in Forest County (K. DeBoer and Dettwiler, again) 23 March. The next far northern county to report was Ashland 29 March (Brady). High counts of 8 migrants each were noted in Milwaukee (Hagner) and Waukesha (Szymczak) Counties 22 and 21 April, respectively.

Wood Thrush—The current record cut-off date of 16 April 1979 is also the earliest ever. Hagner found one 14 April at Estabrook Park in Milwaukee County and established a new all-time early date. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records" and "By the Wayside." The next reports came from Milwaukee again (Bontly and Zehner), as well as, in Waukesha County (Szymczak) 30 April. It was almost shocking that an individual was found all the way up in Florence County the very next day (B. and K. Kavanagh). Eighteen were counted 12 May in Marathon County (Belter).

American Robin—Present BOP north to Bayfield (Keyel), Chippewa (Cameron), and Sawyer (Keyel) Counties. The highest concentrations appeared in the western counties of La Crosse, St. Croix, and Trempealeau where totals of 450–550 were seen 11 March-7 April.

Varied Thrush—Haseleu kept tabs on an individual that was coming to her feeder in Washburn County between 3–20 March. Another bird, a true "one day wonder," appeared in Washington County 14 March (Jungkuntz).

Gray Catbird—A bird was found 8 April in Green County (Austin). Observations began in earnest 14 April with county reports in Dane, Iowa, La Crosse, Rock, Waukesha, and Winnebago. By the end of April the species was present as far north as Brown County (Van Duyse). Up to 45 individuals were counted hanging around the Capitol Square in Dane County on the fallout day 2 May.

Northern Mockingbird*—Tessen flushed an early individual out of a conifer patch in Outagamie County 14 March. Much closer to the typical date this species is observed was a bird at Harrington Beach SP in Ozaukee County (Murkowski) 2 May. Next seen at Lake Park in Milwaukee County 5 May (m. obs.). Pen-

dergast spotted one in Wood County 18 May. The following day, Bridge and Stutz saw one in Jefferson County. Another was found in Ozaukee at Forest Beach Migratory Preserve on the 20th (Schaefer and Szymczak). That same day Janz reported from Portage County. A final Milwaukee County observation was made 21 May at a separate location from the earlier one (Darby).

Brown Thrasher—A bird that might have over-wintered was seen BOP in Dane County (Hanson). Present in Monroe County 18 March (Kaberle) and in Grant (Knox) and Milwaukee (Huf) Counties 21 March. Reached Marathon County 8 April (Murkowski) and a report came from Douglas County the next day (S. and L. LaValley). Found in Bayfield (Oksiuta) and Florence (B. and K. Kavanagh) Counties by 15 April. High counts of 20 and 28 individuals were tallied 27 April in Burnett (Dadisman) and Washburn (Paulios) Counties, respectively.

American Pipit—W. Mueller observed 2 at Forest Beach Migratory Preserve in Ozaukee County 20 March. The next county report, of 20 birds, came from Dane 24 March (m. obs.) County. Not seen in another county until 13 April when detected in Columbia (Keyel). Anich found one in Bayfield County 19 May. On 7 May, 27 were counted in Winnebago County (Malcolm) and 26 were tallied in Oneida County 6 May (Prestby). Just missing the record cut-off date for departure was an individual seen in Dane County 30 May by Tessen. Noted in eighteen counties.

Bohemian Waxwing—Seen during the season in Ashland, Door, Douglas, Oneida, Sawyer, and Vilas Counties. High counts of 55 individuals each were reported in Oneida (Prestby) and Vilas (Baughman) Counties. Krerowicz made the final observation 6 April in Ashland County.

Cedar Waxwing—Flocks were found statewide BOP with numbers exceeding 100 birds reported in Manitowoc (Sontag) and Marathon (Sabatke) Counties.

Lapland Longspur—The most northern BOP report originated from Shawano County (Swelstad). Persico counted 700 in St. Croix County 17 March. Totals of 400 individuals each were reported in Ozaukee (m. obs.) and Richland (Peachey) Counties. Last seen 6 May in Columbia County (Betchkal) and on the 14th in Oneida County (Prestby).

Snow Bunting—Seen statewide BOP, with the largest flock being 1,000 birds found by Hoeft in Marathon County 13 March and 500 seen in Taylor County (Risch). Last observed 27 April in Iron County (Anich) and 30 April in Vilas County (Prestby).

Ovenbird—Two birds were singing on territories in Jefferson County 26 April (Szymczak). Gustafson found 2 more the next day in Waukesha County. Before the end of the month, the species was found in six more counties. Reported 1 May in Door (R. and C. Lukes) and Eau Claire (Lind) Counties. Reached Florence County two days later (B. and K. Kavanagh). Duchek counted 20 migrants in Dane County during the fallout 2 May.

Worm-eating Warbler*—Holton discovered one at Seminary Woods in Milwaukee County 4 May. A singing male was noted in Sauk County at Devil's Lake 23 May (Pendergast; see "By the Wayside") and observed again 26 May (Rueckheim).

Louisiana Waterthrush—There are four record arrivals before the 7 April cut-off date. They have been established 30 March, 3 April (two dates), and 4 April. This year, two observations were submitted to the WSO Records Committee and were approved. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records." The first is a new all-time early set 26 March in Iowa County (Roethe). The second was photographed (Fig. 16) by Bridge 1 April in Grant County. See "By the Wayside." Other returning birds were detected 3 April in Crawford County (Stark), the next day in Green Lake County (Tessen), and 7 April in Waukesha County (Dixon). The sixth county report came from Sauk 14 April (m. obs.). Six were found in Sauk County at Baxter's Hollow 27 May (Stutz). In the western portion of the state, birds were found north to Burnett (S. Anderson and Bacchetti) and Polk (Maercklein) Counties. In the east, present north to Manitowoc County (Schroeder).

Northern Waterthrush—Paulios heard one singing in Dane County 18 April. Next sighted in Racine County 20 April (Howe). By

23 April, Richmond had found a male singing in Menominee County. The more northern counties of Barron (Maercklein) and Vilas (Anich) did not report their first birds until 2 May. Sixteen were counted during the fallout of 2 May in Dane County at Lake Farm County Park (Schilke).

Golden-winged Warbler—Evanson made the first report 1 May in Dane County. It was a lucky break, because the fallout that occurred the next day produced reports from at least twelve additional Dane locations. Even more amazing was that they were also reported on the 2nd in Dodge, Dunn, Fond du Lac, Grant, Jefferson, Kenosha, La Crosse, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, and Sauk Counties. Prestby found 2 in Florence County 4 May. Reached Ashland and Douglas Counties on the 7th. Not surprisingly, the high count, 15 birds, was observed 2 May in Dane County at Frautschi Point (Ellis).

Blue-winged Warbler—Bridge found the first in Jefferson County 26 April. Seen in Dane (Nolan), Iowa (Mack), and Kenosha (J. and K. DeBoer) Counties two days later. Lund found a returning bird 2 May in Clark County. Reached Marathon County 5 May (Belter) and Barron County (Jerome) on the 6th. La Puma and Lesak counted 20 in Dane County 2 May during the fallout. The other northern limit counties for this species were Burnett, Chippewa, Door, Dunn, Pierce, and Polk.

Blue-winged × Golden-winged Warbler—The "Brewster's" hybrid, which has been detected annually in recent years, has a record cut-off date of 4 May. The only earlier date is 1 May 2001. During the 2 May fallout in Dane County, Ellis found one at Frautschi Point. A second report was made at Woodland Dunes Nature Center (Waterstreet) in Manitowoc County 24 May.

Black-and-white Warbler—An early returning bird was spotted at Kohler-Andrae SP in Sheboygan County 15 April (m. obs.). Another observation was not made until 24 April when one turned up in Milwaukee County (Vargo). The third and fourth counties to report were Marathon (Belter) and Ozaukee (Frank) 27 April. Reached Barron (Maercklein), Forest (Keyel), and Iron (Brady) Counties 2 May. Found in Ashland County on the 4th (Anich and Brady). Totals of 30–45 migrants each were reported in two separate Dane County locations 2 May.

Prothonotary Warbler—Decisive arrival 2 May in Crawford (Stark), Dane (Duchek), Dodge (Schaefer), and Milwaukee (Snider) Counties. Reported 19 May in Polk County, which was the northern limit for the species distribution. Twelve were counted in Crawford 14 May (Stark) and 7 were tallied in Jefferson County at Lake Koshkonong 23 May (Bridge). As expected, distribution primarily ran along the Mississippi River corridor in the west and continued east toward Monroe, Columbia, and Ozaukee Counties.

Tennessee Warbler—Found in Dane (Evanson) and Rock (Woodard) Counties 1 May. Seen at many more Dane locations the next day, as well as, in Brown, Fond du Lac, Jefferson, La Crosse, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Sauk, and Walworth Counties. In addition, a bird was also found north to Polk County (Maercklein). Reported from Forest County 5 May (Prestby) and in Bayfield County (Brady) on the 11th. Persico counted 60 in St. Croix County 12 May. The final observation in the southern tier of counties was in Milwaukee County 27 May (Zehner).

Orange-crowned Warbler—Found in Milwaukee (Frank) and Racine (Hoy Audubon) Counties 18 April. Paulios saw one the next day in Dane County. Already present in Oneida County 21 April (Nemec) and in Florence (K. Kavanagh) County by 25 April. The highest number seen was 4 birds at Wind Point in Racine 4 May (Hoy Audubon). Final appearances occurred in the southern tier of counties 19 May in Milwaukee (m. obs.) and Sheboygan (Murkowski) Counties.

Nashville Warbler—Narrowly missing a record early arrival date was Howe's sighting away from Lake Michigan in Racine County 19 April. The next report came from Menominee County (Richmond) 23 April. The third county report came from Milwaukee (Wanger) the following day. Seen in Vilas County 1 May (Prestby) and in Iron County (m. obs.) 2 May. On 4 May, 20 migrants were reported in both Manitowoc (Domagalski) and Milwaukee (Korducki) Counties. A single bird found by Zehner 28 May in Milwaukee County might have been a migrant.

Connecticut Warbler—Appeared 5 May in Milwaukee (Jaeger), Ozaukee (W. Mueller), and Waukesha (Szyba) Counties. Seen 9 May in Portage County by DeRubeis. Three individuals were found singing on territories 11 May in Iron County (Dadisman). Keyel counted 11 birds in Douglas County EOP. Seen in nineteen counties.

Mourning Warbler—One male was observed in Dane County at Capitol Square (m. obs.) 2 May. A migrant was seen the next day in Milwaukee County at Warnimont Park (Flores Wiskowski) and singing on territory in Walworth County (Szymczak). Found in Dunn County (P. Campbell) 8 May, Marathon County 10 May (Belter), and Sawyer County (Keyel) on the 13th. Counts of 8 individuals each were reported 13 May-EOP at specific sites in Douglas and Juneau Counties.

Kentucky Warbler—First observed at Wyalusing SP in Grant County (Stark) 3 May. Found the next day in Walworth County (Szymczak). Other reports during the season came from Badfish Creek WA in Dane County 12 May (Bergeson), Tower Hill SP in Iowa County on the 17th (Schilke), and Sauk County on the 23rd (Pendergast). The high count was 5 individuals found at Wyalusing EOP (m. obs.).

Common Yellowthroat—Howe discovered one while he was walking in Walworth County 25 April. Found two days later in Dane (Henrikson) and Waukesha (Gustafson) Counties. Had already reached Ashland (Ebeling) and Florence (K. Kavanagh) Counties by 3 May. Persico counted a whopping 150 at Crex Meadows in Burnett County 25 May.

Hooded Warbler—Singing males were seen in Walworth County 24 April (Wilson) and the following day in Waukesha County (Szymczak). These early observations were not followed by new reports until 2 May in Dane (two locations; Graham and Paulios) and Fond du Lac (Butcher) Counties. A singing male was heard (but not seen) outside the normal cluster of southern breeding locations in Door County 26 May (Schilke). Outside of the Southern Kettle Moraine in Walworth and Waukesha Counties, no significant numbers of breeding birds were found. Reported in seventeen counties.

American Redstart—Abruptly arrived 2 May in twelve counties, including as far north as Marinette (J. Campbell). Seen in Burnett (McInroy) and Clark (Lund) Counties 4 May. Reached Douglas County (Keyel) on the 10th. During the fallout of 2 May, counts of 4–5 birds each were noted in Crawford, Dane, and Rock Counties.

Kirtland's Warbler**—The record cut-off date for the species is 18 May, with only two earlier dates 10 and 13 May (both held by J. Trick). This year, he found four color-banded birds in Adams County 11 May. Singing males were also documented in Bayfield, Douglas, Marinette, and Vilas Counties through the efforts of Baughman, Jackson, S. LaValley, and Swelstad. Updates regarding the ongoing work with this species can be found by putting the following address into your browser—www.fws.gov/midwest/greenbay/

Cape May Warbler—Appeared 2 May in Brown (J. and P. Trick) and Dane Counties (two locations; m. obs.). Seen the next day in Calumet, Outagamie, Ozaukee, and Portage Counties, as well as, in Florence County (K. Kavanagh). The high count of migrants, 4 birds, was reported in both Dane (Paulios) and Milwaukee (Snider) Counties 7 May. Anich tallied 13 birds in Sawyer County on the 10th. The last southern county report was made 27 May from Lion's Den in Ozaukee (Schaefer and Szymczak).

Cerulean Warbler—T. Wood discovered the first of the season 27 April in Walworth County singing an excellent rendition of a Northern Parula's song. Next reported in Dane County 29 April (m. obs.) and in Grant County (m. obs.) the following day. Found in Jefferson and Racine Counties the next day. Outside of their stronghold at Wyalusing SP in Grant, where 10–30 could be heard in May, 8 were tallied in Crawford County EOP (Schilke). An isolated report in the north-central part of the state was made in Marathon County 13 May (Hoeft). That same day, 2 individuals were found in the northwestern county of Polk (B. Collins). Found in twenty-one counties.

Northern Parula—The current record cut-off date is 9 April, with the only earlier dates being the all-time early 18 March 1942 and another 5 April 2011. Wenzel's photograph of a

bird taken 6 April in Racine County joins those other dates. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records." Klubertanz found one 10 April in Rock County. Next seen 16 April in Milwaukee County at Doctor's Park (Frank) and Lake Park (Wilson). The fourth county report did not occur until 29 April in Walworth (Wilson). Found by Prestby in Vilas County 1 May and in Iron County the next day (Brady). Twenty birds were counted in Dane County 2 May (La Puma and Lesak).

Magnolia Warbler—Reported from no fewer than twelve separate locations in Dane County 2 May, as well as in Jefferson, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Rock, and Sauk Counties. That day, La Puma and Lesak counted a maximum of 6 individuals at Hoyt Park in Dane. Seen in Door (R. and C. Lukes) and Oneida (Nemec) Counties 4 May and in Sawyer (Prestby) and Vilas (David) Counties by the 8th. O'Connor tallied 14 during her banding and observational work at the County Zoo in Milwaukee 12 May. Counts of 10 migrants were made in both Dane and Racine Counties spanning 8–11 May. The last southern report came from Kletzsch Park in Milwaukee County 30 May (Snider).

Bay-breasted Warbler—Seen 2 May in Dane (m. obs.), Milwaukee (m. obs.), and Rock (Cullum) Counties. Reported in St. Croix County on the 5th (Paulios). Observations of 5 birds each were made in Brown (m. obs.), Door (S. Peterson), and Milwaukee (Wilson) Counties 12 May. The last southern county report came from Ozaukee on the 27th (Schaefer and Szymczak). Reported in twenty-six counties, none of which were located in the northern third of the state.

Blackburnian Warbler—Three singing males were seen 30 April in Dane County at Pheasant Branch Conservancy (m. obs.). The same day, a bird was found at Grant Park in Milwaukee County (K. DeBoer). Additional county observations occurred 2 May when they were noted in Jefferson, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Racine, Rock, Sauk, Washburn (Maercklein), and Waukesha. Eighteen were counted at Wisconsin Point in Douglas County 28 May (Keyel and Prestby). A lingering male was present EOP in Waukesha (Szymczak).

Yellow Warbler—First reported 19 April in Dane County (Henrikson and Schwarz). Next reported in Dodge County 22 April (Batterman). Not reported in another county until 25 April when one was found in Waushara County (Malueg). The fourth and fifth counties, Milwaukee and Racine, were added 27 April. Maercklein observed his first 2 May in Polk County and B. and K. Kavanagh found their first the next day in Florence County. On 25 May, 125 were concentrated in and around Crex Meadows in Burnett County (Persico). Nichols counted 30 at Lake Farm County Park in Dane 2 May.

Chestnut-sided Warbler—The only April reports were made in Waukesha County (Winter) on the 26th and Rock County (Smallwood) on the 29th. Found 1 May in Dane County (Evanson) and the next day in Polk County (Maercklein). Detected in Oneida County (Prestby) 4 May and in Ashland County (Krerowicz) on the 5th. La Puma and Lesak counted 17 at Hoyt Park in Dane during the 2 May fallout.

Blackpoll Warbler—Present in Dane County 1 May (White) and found in Milwaukee County (W. Mueller) the following day. Added in Dodge, Grant, Outagamie, Portage, Sauk, and Sheboygan Counties on the 3rd. Seen in Ashland County on the 5th (Krerowicz). M. Weber counted 9 while at Peninsula SP in Door County 20 May. The final reports from the southern counties came 27 May in Dane (Graham) and Dodge (Frank); however, northern-tier counties still had lingering birds.

Black-throated Blue Warbler—Reported in Fond du Lac (Butcher), Jefferson (Bridge), Milwaukee (m. obs.), and Racine (Pugh) Counties 2 May. Despite the fallout conditions on the 2nd in Dane County, they were not found there until the next day. Seen in Marinette County 12 May and in Bayfield County (Anich and Brady) on the 18th. Counts of 2 birds each were made in eight counties. There were no southern county reports EOP.

Palm Warbler—The record cut-off date is 10 April, with only two other April dates and a 24–27 March 1968 before it. Schaufenbuel's bird 16 March in Dane County is now the all-time early date. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records." Next

seen by Reimer in Calumet County 7 April. The third county report came from Pepin 13 April (R. Anderson). Arrived in the counties of Dane (Marschalek) and Milwaukee (m. obs.) 15 and 16 April, respectively. Reached Oneida (Prestby) and Sawyer (Anich) Counties 19 April and Ashland County (Anich) 24 April. A staggering 200 were tallied at Frautschi Point in Dane (Ellis and Illes) during 2 May fallout conditions, by the next day they "only" counted 75 birds at that same location. The last southern county report came from Dane 21 May (Lesak).

Pine Warbler—The record cut-off date is 7 April, with the only earlier reports being a batch of four observations that spanned 27–29 March in 2007. This year, A. Holschbach established an all-time early arrival 22 March in Iowa County. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records." The Committee also accepted a second report from Waukesha County (Gustafson) 31 March. There was a torrent of early reports of this species, with no fewer than nine additional county reports between 1 April and the 7 April cut-off date. Among those were sightings in Forest (T. Wood), Sawyer (Prestby), and Vilas (Peczynski) Counties. Six migrants were found at Lake Park in Milwaukee County 21 April (Hunter and Mooney).

Yellow-rumped Warbler—BOP in Dane (Thiessen), Iowa (A. Holschbach), Kenosha (Willard), Milwaukee (Bontly and Zehner), and Waukesha (Szymczak) Counties. After 23 March, when Henrikson found 4 in Dane, detection of this species appeared to become steady. Belter found his first in Marathon County 29 March and Ankeny saw one on the last day of March in Eau Claire County. Observed 2 April in Ashland (Krerowicz) and Douglas (Keyel) Counties. The team of Ellis and Illes tallied 400 individuals 2 May at Frautschi Point in Dane County and 250 were counted 6 May in Ashland County at Prentice Park (Krerowicz).

Yellow-throated Warbler*—The record cut-off date is 21 April, with five earlier dates that fall between 6–17 April. A "tax day" surprise was found by Lubahn and Mooney 15 April at Lake Park in Milwaukee County and was photo-documented. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records." Stark observed an individual at Wyalusing SP in Grant County 13 April, where 2 birds were found the next day (Gorzo and Puchalski). The high count at Wyalusing was 5 birds (Stark). The only other county report came from Dane 7 May (Gericke-Fandel).

Prairie Warbler*—A singing male returned for the third year to the Southern Kettle Moraine in Waukesha County 3 May (Moretti and Szymczak). The bird was present through EOP.

Black-throated Green Warbler—Seen by S. Cutright at Harrington Beach SP in Ozaukee County 19 April and the following day in Milwaukee County (Hahn). The third county report came from Waukesha 21 April (Szymczak). Present in Door County 28 April (Edmunds) and in Forest (Keyel) and Florence (K. Kavanagh) Counties over the next two days. Overall, arrivals appeared to have a more eastern distribution. Two returning residents were detected 4 May in Ashland County (Anich). M. Anderson counted 20 at Newport SP in Door 21 May. Other totals, of 15 migrants each, were reported 2 May in Dane County (La Puma and Lesak) and Milwaukee (Boyle).

Canada Warbler—W. Mueller observed 2 birds in Milwaukee County 2 May. The next day the species was seen in Dane County (two locations, Graham and Paulios). Discovered in Waupaca (Petters) and Marathon (Belter) Counties on the 4th and 5th, respectively. Reached Bayfield (Brady) and Douglas (Prestby) Counties 17 May. Huf tallied 4 migrating birds at Estabrook Park in Milwaukee 4 May. Bontly found a lingering bird at Schlitz Audubon Nature Center in Milwaukee County 30 May.

Wilson's Warbler—The record cut-off date is 1 May, with seven April records spanning 20–30th. Single birds were found 1 May at Governor's Island (Graham) and Picnic Point (E. Wood), both in Dane County. Reported in several additional Dane County locations during the 2 May fallout, and in the counties of Jefferson (Bridge), Marquette (Schneider), and Milwaukee (Wilson). Persico found one 5 May in St. Croix County and single birds were detected in Sawyer (Keyel) and Burnett (Schroeder) Counties on the 12th and 13th, respectively. Finally seen in Bayfield County 17 May (Brady). Eight were counted at Lake Park in Milwaukee 19 May (J. Weber). The absolute last report of

the season was of 3 birds in Milwaukee County 28 May (Zehner).

Yellow-breasted Chat*—Dixon and Wenzel found one in Racine County 3 May. WSO convention goers found a bird at Brooklyn SWA in Dane County 10 May. A third county report came from Kenosha County at the Chiwaukee Prairie SNA (Krerowicz) 13 May. Next reported in Waukesha County on the 15th (Szymczak). Additional reports came from Ozaukee County (20 May, N. Cutright), Green County (23 May, Schwarz), and a second Waukesha County report 30 May (Bruhnke and Hahn).

Eastern Towhee—Migration was protracted for this species. It was noted early in Dane County 15 March (Henrikson) and in Monroe County (Kaberle) the next day. Additional reports were made 17 March in Columbia, Grant, Jefferson, Kenosha, Manitowoc, and Waukesha Counties. Found 1 April in Door County (R. and C. Lukes). Finally reached north into Barron County (Jerome) and Burnett County (McInroy) 14 April and Florence (K. Kavanagh) County by 23 April. It should be noted that in 2011 Kavanagh found her first a full ten days earlier. Finally seen in Bayfield County 7 May (m. obs.).

American Tree Sparrow—Present BOP north to Barron and Shawano Counties, including a high total of 150 seen in Jefferson (Stutz). Last reported 4 May in Brown County (Swelstad) and in Manitowoc County on the 6th (Sontag).

Chipping Sparrow—The record cut-off date is 16 March, with earlier arrival dates falling between 4–12 March. This year, four noteworthy observations were made beginning with Wilson's bird found in Milwaukee County 13 March and occurring on each consecutive day in Waushara County (Stelm), another in Milwaukee (Winze), and finally on the cut-off date in Brown County (Verhaagh). Seen 18 March in Door County (R. and C. Lukes), and then, 4 April in Eau Claire (Betchkal and Lind), Langlade (Wickersheim), and Polk (Rowe) Counties. Reached Florence County 14 April (K. Kavanagh). Korducki counted 50 at Lake Park in Milwaukee 6 May.

Clay-colored Sparrow—First appeared in Waukesha County 19 April (Gustafson). The next county reports came 25 April from the western part of the state in Dunn (P. Campbell) and La Crosse (Whitemarsh), followed by Grant (Bloom) on the 26th. Reached Ashland (Anich) and Bayfield (Oksiuta) Counties 3 May. Forty were tallied at the Badger Army Ammunition Plant in Sauk County 11 May (m. obs.).

Field Sparrow—Initially found in Grant County 13 March (m. obs.). Next observed in Jefferson (Szymczak) and St. Croix (Persico) Counties 17 March. Maercklein found his first 5 April in Polk County. Did not reach Florence County until 23 April (K. Kavanagh).

Vesper Sparrow—Found 22 March in Iowa County (A. Holschbach). Reported two days later in Manitowoc (J. Trick) and Walworth (Szymczak) Counties. Appeared in Door County (R. and C. Lukes) 8 April, Marinette County 12 April (B. and K. Kavanagh), and in Florence County 14 April (K. Kavanagh). Seen in Douglas County 21 April (J. and P. Trick). While traveling a route near Minong in Washburn County, Paulios tallied 24.

Lark Sparrow—Yoerger discovered an individual at Cook Arboretum in Rock County 22 April, the same day Paulios found one in Sauk County. The next day, Ambrose found one in Milwaukee County at Lake Park. The fourth and fifth county reports came from Crawford (Stark) and Dunn (P. Campbell) 24 and 25 April. The most eastern reports came in the form of 2 returning birds along the Walworth/Jefferson County line 29 April (Wilson) and another reported individual at Veteran's Park in Milwaukee 6 May (m. obs.). In the extreme northwest, birds were reported (as they infrequently are) in Bayfield (Jackson) and Burnett (Bacchetti) Counties EOP. The season's highest number was 6 birds in Dunn (Hogseth) County. Seen in fourteen counties.

Savannah Sparrow—The record cut-off date is 17 March, with the only earlier dates falling 11 March and all-time early 6 March 2003. Two new all-time early dates were set this year. The earliest came from Korducki in Waukesha County 4 March and the second observation was made 5–6 March in Manitowoc County by Domagalski. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records." A third county report was made on the cut-off date in Columbia (Tessen) County.

Next reported in Milwaukee County 18 March (Mooney and Wilson). Decisive influx into the eastern portion of the state, with no March reports northwest of Juneau and Monroe Counties. Found in Barron County (Evanson) 6 April, Florence County 14 April (K. Kavanagh), and Ashland/Bayfield (Anich) Counties 20 April. Concentrations ranging from 30–100 birds were counted at Buena Vista Grasslands in Portage County (m. obs.) after mid-April.

Grasshopper Sparrow—Two different observations were made on the current record cut-off date 19 April, one in Portage County (Pendergast) and the other in Waukesha County (Gustafson). Another county report did not occur until 27 April, when Doverspike heard one in Columbia. The next day, WSO field trip goers found 2 birds in Green Lake County. Totals of 15–18 birds were reported in Pierce (Persico) and Sauk (m. obs.) Counties. Northern county limits were Door, Dunn, Polk, Portage, and St. Croix.

Henslow's Sparrow—The record cut-off date is 10 April, with three earlier April records and the definitive early date of 30 March 1986. Nowak found a bird 19 March in Walworth County that will become the new all-time early arrival date. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records." New arrivals appeared 13 April in Grant County (Stark) and in Waukesha County (Howe) the next day. A fourth county report did not occur until 24 April when seen in Green Lake County (T. Schultz). Thirty were counted in Iowa County 8 May (Ramminger and Wernerehl). Found north to Dunn, Polk, Portage, St. Croix, and Waupaca Counties.

Le Conte's Sparrow—The record cut-off date is 17 April. Five earlier dates span 29 March-14 April. T. Wood's observation in Milwaukee County 14 April will tie for the fifth earliest date. See "By the Wayside." Other April reports came from Milwaukee (again!) on the 25th (Lubahn) and Pierce County (Persico) on the 29th. Another bird was found in Milwaukee at Lake Park 3 May (Gustafson) and at yet another location (Veteran's Park) on the 5th (Schaefer). Additional county reports came from Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Trempealeau, and Wood (2 birds present 14 May, Brady).

Nelson's Sparrow—Must have been donning a cloaking device, as the only report was made from Burnett County 22 May (Tessen).

Fox Sparrow—BOP observations were made in Dane (m. obs.), Milwaukee (Huf), and Winnebago (Ziebell) Counties. Seen 8 March in Door (R. and C. Lukes), Racine (Howe) and Washington (Schaefer) Counties. Found north to Polk County 10 March (Maercklein), Barron County 14 March (Jerome), as well as, in Oneida (Prestby) and Florence (B. and K. Kavanagh) Counties by 19 March. Concentrations ranging from 20–35 individuals were found in at least six counties. Last reported 1 May in Florence (Keyel).

Song Sparrow—Reported north to Brown (J. Knickelbine) and Dunn (Butek) Counties BOP. Decidely early arrival with returning birds found in Florence County 15 March (K. Kavanagh) and both Ashland (Brady) and Bayfield (Nemec) Counties the next day.

Lincoln's Sparrow—There are currently two records before the cut-off date of 9 April, which are 7 April and the all-time early of 5 April 1981. Discoveries 13 March in Milwaukee County (Bontly) and 14 March in Juneau County (West) were formally accepted as new all-time early arrival dates. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records." New reports began around the more traditional date of 15 April in La Crosse County (Puchalski) and Monroe County 21 April (Kaberle). The species made landfall in the "northwoods" counties of Ashland, Florence, and Iron between 2–4 May. While surveying in Ashland, Keyel counted 20 individuals 8 May. As many as 10 migrants were noted 5 May in Ozaukee County at Forest Beach Migratory Preserve (J. Trick). The final two southern county observations occurred 21 May in Ozaukee (Bontly) and 27 May in Dane County (Graham).

Swamp Sparrow—Present BOP in Milwaukee, Sauk, Walworth, and Waukesha Counties. Discovered up in Portage County 18 March (m. obs.) and in Door County 21 March (S. Peterson). First noted in Polk County 1 April (Maercklein) and in Florence County 8 April (B. and K. Kavanagh). Teasing out over-wintering birds, migrants, and actual returning territorial birds can sometimes prove difficult. Helpful toward this end was an early season high count

of 25 birds in Walworth 25 March (Howe) which was already comprised of at least 17 singing males.

White-throated Sparrow—Found north to Marinette (Hurst) and Sawyer (Prestby) Counties BOP. Noted in Ashland County 15 March (Krerowicz). Uttech had 100 migrants take over his property in Ozaukee County 20 April. No lingering migrants were observed in unexpected southern counties EOP.

Harris's Sparrow—Found in Douglas County 29 April (S. and L. LaValley). Additional birds were swept in during the 2 May fallout in Dane (Kauffman) and Ozaukee (Murkowski and S. Cutright) Counties. More were discovered the next day in Bayfield (Krerowicz) and La Crosse (Lohman) Counties. Additional birds were reported in Columbia, Dunn, Milwaukee, Outagamie, Polk, and Taylor Counties through 9 May. After that date, there were no more reports, period. The only sighting of multiple birds was the 4 tallied in Polk (Jeff Peterson) County 8 May.

White-crowned Sparrow—Mid-March reports came from Brown (Swelstad), Dane (Ellis), and Vernon (Jackson) Counties. Added in no fewer than six new southern counties through mid-April. Reached Eau Claire (Lind) and Marathon (Belter) Counties 1 May. Forest Beach Migratory Preserve in Ozaukee County was "littered" with 300 individuals 5 May (W. Mueller). Late-May observations came from Door County on the 25th (Boone) and Milwaukee County on the 27th (Flores and Flores Wiskowski).

Golden-crowned Sparrow—There are currently only nine state records of this species. A photo and specimen from 23 April in Grant County (Fortner) was submitted to the WSO Records Committee and accepted. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records."

Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon form)—One report came from McInroy in Burnett County 22 March. A second originated in Brown County 23 March (photographed by Swelstad).

Dark-eyed Junco—Present BOP north to Chippewa, Dunn, Eau Claire, Marinette, Polk, and Shawano Counties. Persico counted between 125–140 individuals in St. Croix County 17–24 March. The final southern county reports of the season came from Milwaukee 10 May (Goodman), Sauk County the next day (Tessen), Adams County 13 May (Pendergast), and Dodge County on the 15th (Setzer).

Summer Tanager—There are three records before the 27 April cut-off date. They are the all-time early set 20 April 1974 and two others 23–25 April. See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records" for approval of Mooney's new all-time early 16 April date in Milwaukee County. On 2 May, a female was found at Hoyt Park in Dane County (La Puma and Lesak), a 1st year male was seen at Pheasant Branch Conservancy in Dane (m. obs.) County, and an adult male was reported in Milwaukee County (W. Mueller). Later season Milwaukee County reports were of a female at Lake Park, a 1st year male at Schlitz Audubon Nature Center, and another 1st year male at Grant Park. Observed in Calumet County 3 May (Tessen). Seen in Bayfield County 5–8 May (photographs given to Brady by unknown observer). The next county report, a singing male, originated in Door 8 May (W. Mueller). Later in the season, a female was reported from Peninsula SP in Door. The sixth county report, of another first-year male, came from Ozaukee 16 May (Huebner).

Scarlet Tanager—Arrived 2 May in Dane, Jefferson, Milwaukee, Racine, Rock, Walworth, and Waukesha Counties. That same day, counts of 12 birds were reported in Dane at both Hoyt Park (La Puma and Lesak) and Lake Farm County Park (Schilke). Seen the next day in Trempealeau County (Carlyle). Observed 4 May in Clark (Lund) and Price (Krakowski) Counties. Peczynski discovered his first 10 May in Forest County.

Northern Cardinal—Not reported in Iron or Rusk Counties.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak—Arrivals entered the state with a decidedly western tendency. First seen in Grant (Ouren) and Vernon (Hayes) Counties 21 April and the next day in Iowa County (Pugh). By end of April, a returning bird was present in Clark County (Lund). Other than her report, no other April reports were north of a line drawn horizontally across the state from La Crosse County. Reached Bay-

field County 3 May (Brady). Counts numbering between 20–35 individuals were seen at the Capitol Square in Dane County during the 2 May fallout.

Blue Grosbeak***—See "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Records" for the approved observation made by Russart in Milwaukee County 8 May.

Indigo Bunting—The sole April report originated in Iowa County on the 30th (Mack). Appeared the following day in Dane (Witynski), Milwaukee (W. Mueller), and Polk (Maercklein) Counties. Reached Florence County (B. and K. Kavanagh) 7 May and Douglas County (Keyel) on the 10th.

Dickcissel—Their return began 4 May in Marquette County (Nolan). Next seen during a WSO field trip in Iowa County 10 May. The third county report was made by Bridge in Jefferson County 18 May. The following day, more reports were added in Green and Milwaukee Counties. By EOP, the species had reached Dunn (P. Campbell), Marathon (Belter and Hurlburt), and St. Croix (Persico) Counties. Twenty-five were tallied at the Thousand's Rock Prairie in Dane (Lindemer) County on the 22nd and 20 were found in Portage County (Swelstad) on the 26th. In all, the species was detected in twenty-nine counties.

Bobolink—A returning bird was found in Door County 22 April (R. and C. Lukes). Paulios filed the only other April reports from Dane and Iowa Counties on the 30th. The next county reports came from Monroe (Epstein) and Ozaukee (Jaeger) Counties 2 May. Seen up in Taylor County 3 May (Risch) and in Bayfield County (Oksiuta) on the 11th. Numbers as high as 75 birds were found at the Badger Army Ammunition Plant in Sauk County (m. obs.) 11 May.

Red-winged Blackbird—Present north to Shawano County BOP (Malliet) and their numbers were high, including 550 in Dane County (Paulios). Already on territories in Florence (K. Kavanagh) and Vilas (Peczynski) Counties 10–11 March. Reached Bayfield (Oksiuta) and Douglas (Anich) Counties 14 March. The highest concentration was 1,500 birds in Marathon County 2 April (Pendergast). Etter Hale counted 800 in Jefferson County 16 March.

Eastern Meadowlark—BOP in Monroe (Epstein), Outagamie (Swelstad), Racine (J. and K. DeBoer), and Waukesha (Schaefer and Szymczak) Counties. Found in Door County (R. and C. Lukes) 11 March, Florence County (K. Kavanagh) 14 March, Burnett County (Haseleu) 15 March, and Ashland County (Krerowicz) the next day. Observers counted between 44–68 at the Badger Army Ammunition Plant in Sauk County 11 May. Thirty were tallied at Buena Vista Grasslands in Portage County by mid-April (m. obs.).

Western Meadowlark—Seen through mid-March in Dane, Dunn, Green, Portage, Sauk, and Trempealeau Counties. Work during the atlas showed a lack of breeding reports in the extreme southeast and northeast counties. This year, singing males were found 19 May in Racine County (Willard and Witynski) and EOP in Florence County (Spahn). Belter counted 30 at Buena Vista Grasslands in Portage 15 April. Seen in twenty-four counties.

Yellow-headed Blackbird—The record cut-off date is 1 April with eight earlier reports spanning 20–30 March. Dixon observed a returning male in Racine County 30 March. New reports began 3 April in Waukesha County (Horn) and in Dodge County (Frank) 5 April. Reached Eau Claire County 24 April (Lind). As is normally the case, their progression into the state only reached north into Brown, Burnett, Marathon, and Taylor Counties. Ziebell tallied 246 in Winnebago County during the May Day Count on 19 May. Lesser numbers, between 20–45 birds, were observed in Outagamie County EOP (m. obs.).

Rusty Blackbird—Present BOP in Iowa, Outagamie, Racine, Rock, Walworth, Washington, and Waukesha Counties. Reported 10 March in Door County (R. and C. Lukes), the next day in Dunn County (Butek), and 17 March in both Polk (Maercklein) and Taylor (Risch) Counties. Anich had one flyover in Douglas County 19 March. Pendergast found 600 in Marathon County 2 April. Paulios saw 350 at Lake Kegonsa in Dane County 28 March and S. Peterson observed the same number in Door County 18 April. The final southern county reports came from Sheboygan (Pecquex) 16 May and in Ozaukee (Sommer) Counties the following day.

Brewer's Blackbird—Ten birds were found BOP in Rock County (Cullum). Reported 8 March in Outagamie (Malliet and Tessen) County and in Racine County (K. DeBoer) the next day. Seen in Door County (R. and C. Lukes) 10 March and in Florence County (K. Kavanagh) 15 March. After a slight delay, they appeared in Barron County (Haseleu) 22 March and a week later in Ashland County (Brady). Winter counted 100 in Dodge County 1 April and Paulios found 75 at Buena Vista Grasslands in Portage County 14 April. An interesting southern report came from Etter Hale 14 May in Jefferson County.

Common Grackle—Found north into Brown (Hagenow and Swelstad) and Trempealeau (Schrinner) Counties BOP. Ashland, Florence, and Vilas Counties welcomed returning birds 13–14 March. The largest flock, at Mead SWA in Marathon County, contained 3,000 birds 31 March (Belter). Approximately 800 were found in Dane County 28 March (Paulios).

Brown-headed Cowbird—BOP reports were essentially confined to the extreme southeastern corner of the state, with the exception of a report in Brown County (Rickaby). Found in Juneau County (Pendergast) 14 March and in Polk County (Maercklein) 17 March. Arrived in Bayfield County 20 March (Oksiuta). Groups numbering between 100–200 were found in the counties of Adams, La Crosse, Marathon, Ozaukee, and Rock.

Orchard Oriole—Seen at Pheasant Branch Conservancy in Dane County 29 April (m. obs.). Noted 2 May at several additional Dane locations, as well as, in Manitowoc (Sontag), Milwaukee (Bontly), and Racine (Pugh) Counties. Returning residents appeared in Portage County 9 May (Schaufenbuel), Clark County (Lund) 16 May, and in Marinette County (J. Campbell and Hurst) on the 24th. Counts of 6 birds each were reported at Bay Beach in Brown County (Swelstad) 6 May and at Governor Dodge SP in Iowa County 10 May (m. obs.). The species is normally absent from the extreme northwestern portion of the state; a report of 4 birds in Burnett County 25 May (Persico) was exceptional.

Baltimore Oriole—First detected in Dane (m. obs.), Milwaukee (Snider), and Waukesha (m. obs.) Counties 26 April. Found in Trempealeau County the next day (Schrinner). While a bird was seen in Douglas County 1 May (S. and L. LaValley), the other northern counties of Florence, Marinette, Oconto, and Taylor saw residents return 2–4 May. Reported in Ashland and Bayfield Counties 8 May. Counts of 20–23 individuals were reported in a couple of locations in Dane during the 2 May fallout.

Pine Grosbeak—Found during the season in Bayfield, Door, Douglas, Florence, Forest, Sawyer, and Vilas Counties. On the Ides of March Keyel counted 37 in Vilas County. Last reported in Door County 30 March (S. Peterson).

Purple Finch—Statewide BOP, with the largest flock numbering 25 individuals in Crawford County (Sandstrom). The season's highest total was 32 birds in Florence County (K. Kavanagh) 25 April. An interesting report came from Domagalski in Manitowoc County EOP. Manitowoc is not a county where birds were detected during the atlas.

European Greenfinch—Mooney found a presumed escapee in Kenosha County 11 March.

Red Crossbill—Found during the season in the following expected counties: Bayfield, Douglas, Florence, Forest, Iron, Marathon, Marinette, Oneida, Price, Sawyer, Taylor, and Vilas. Counts of 30 birds each were made in Douglas (Prestby) and Marinette (Swelstad) Counties. Southern reports came from two counties where breeding was confirmed during the atlas: Portage 5 April (Pendergast) and Walworth 25 March (Hahn). A third report originated in Jackson County 17 March (Otto), where no activity was detected during the atlas.

White-winged Crossbill—Seen BOP in Ashland, Bayfield, Douglas, Marathon, Milwaukee, Sawyer, Taylor, and Waukesha Counties. The Marathon BOP report, also the season's highest number, was of 100 birds (Belter and Sabatke). Found statewide over the course of the period, with the final southern observation being made in Washington County 18 May (Schaefer). Actual EOP reports came from the expected counties of Ashland, Douglas, Iron, and Vilas.

Common Redpoll—Distributed statewide BOP, with the exception of the southwestern region of the state, which often is relatively devoid of this species. The largest flocks numbered 100–140 birds and were reported at or near BOP in Bayfield, Florence, and Sawyer Counties. All April reports came from the northern counties of Ashland, Bayfield, Iron, and Sawyer. The absolute last report originated from Door County 23 April (R. and C. Lukes).

Hoary Redpoll**—Found in Manitowoc County 8 March (Domagalski; see "By the Wayside") and in Ozaukee County the following day (Mooney). Also see "WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012, Accepted Reports."

Pine Siskin—Statewide BOP, with a swarm totaling 80 birds in Sawyer County (Prestby). Observed EOP in the southern counties of Ozaukee (Sommer) and Waukesha (Szymczak). Breeding activity was established during the atlas in Waukesha, but not Ozaukee.

European Goldfinch—K. DeBoer photographed 2 birds in Racine County 10 March and Hern monitored one in Jefferson County 1–22 April.

Evening Grosbeak—Detected in Ashland, Bayfield, Door, Douglas, Florence, Forest, Iron, Marinette, Oconto, Oneida, Sawyer, and Vilas Counties during the season. The largest flock was 60 birds in Forest County during March (m. obs.). Last seen EOP in Bayfield (Seeger) County.

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Bank Swallow was found at nest holes by David Lund.

Merlin portrait taken by David Lund.

"By the Wayside"—Spring 2012

Written documentations of seasonal highlights include: Cinnamon Teal, Black Vulture, Mississippi Kite, Great Gray Owl, Wood Thrush (all-time early), Worm-eating Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush (early), Le Conte's Sparrow (early), and Hoary Redpoll.

CINNAMON TEAL
(*Anas cyanoptera*)

29 April 2012, Vernon Marsh, Waukesha County—This was a colorful male, about the same size as the Blue-winged Teal it associated with, but with a longer, more spatulate solid black bill. The head, neck, and sides were a bright rufous color. The brown scapulars were edged crisply with a thin creamy coloration. The crown was black, as were the rear flanks. The visible secondaries were brown, with the outer two feathers on each side thickly edged with white. This duck never spread its wing during my observation, so I was unable to view the speculum, but another observer was able to obtain a photograph of the speculum prior to my arrival. He let me view the photo and the speculum was blue. The bird occasionally lifted its leg above the waterline and I could see that it was bright yellow. The eye was red. The bird fed with a pair of Blue-winged Teal. It occasionally appeared to be making courtship moves toward the female Blue-winged Teal, but she ignored him, and the male associating with her did not view him as competition and kept on with his feeding. The courtship moves were stretching his neck, raising his head, opening his bill, and brief headbobbing.—*Thomas C. Wood, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin*

BLACK VULTURE
(*Coragyps atratus*)

11 April 2012, outside the Village of Plover on County Hwy B, eastern Portage County—A large, raptor-like bird, it was an obvious vulture looking at the head to body proportions. It was larger than a Northern Harrier, but smaller than a Bald Eagle. The wingspan of the bird also appeared to be a bit smaller than that of a Turkey Vulture. It had a dark gray head that was larger than that of a Turkey Vulture, but still appeared smaller in proportion to the bird's body size. The broad wings were held flat during the flight of the bird. In flight, deep, swift wing beats were followed by a short glide, and gave the bird a somewhat

more labored flight appearance versus that of a Turkey Vulture's effortless and graceful soaring. Eventually the bird started soaring on thermals with its wings still held flat. When it was in flight, I recognized the distinct color pattern on the wings. The wing color was almost jet black, except for whitish patches near the wingtips. The coloration of the bird was mostly jet black, with the other exceptions being a dark gray featherless head.. The head skin was wrinkly and the narrow, hooked bill was a whitish color. The bird had a short, squared-off tail, gray legs, light gray feet, and the overall coloration was jet black without any brownish tinge.—*Rob Pendergast, Plover, Wisconsin.*

Mississippi Kite
(*Ictinia mississippiensis*)

7 May 2012, West of the east entrance to the White River Marsh, Green Lake County—While looking at a group of passerines, I heard a whistling call overhead that sounded like a raptor of some sort. I immediately saw a hawk-like bird come into view and noticed that it had a short, triangular-shaped tail which appeared to be pitch black; long, light gray wings that seemed long for its body size, and a light gray breast. The bird hovered for a moment and I was able to see that it had a whitish head. As it banked to the side, I could plainly see white "patches" on its wings close to the body, matching the white secondaries of a Mississippi Kite. The bird was approximately the size of a Cooper's Hawk, but lacked the rounded wings and long tail. Northern Harrier was eliminated from consideration, as this bird appeared more falcon-like and smaller than a harrier. The vocalization sounded a bit like a Red-shouldered Hawk from a distance; however, as it approached, it sounded like something else. The call was not as shrill as a Red-shouldered, nor as rapid and not nearly as loud.—*Daryl Christensen, Montello, Wisconsin.*

Great Gray Owl
(*Strix nebulosa*)

18 May 2012, Douglas County—When the bird first flew across the road in the early morning sunlight, I saw a large, dark owl. It had a very flat face on a large head, with fairly long and very broad wings and a fairly thick body and tail. Once it landed, I was able to watch it much longer. I noticed the yellow eyes and bill, overall gray with brown (and occasional white flecks) coloration, gray face with darker gray concentric rings, a white, horizontal moustache with a black center. The bird had feathered legs and toes, the barred remiges appeared to be a darker, more consistent brown than the more overall gray of the rest of the bird. The head appeared to be very large and thick, rounded at the top, and without ear tufts. After initially landing in a tree along the roadside, it flew about 50 meters south and landed on a sign. It sat on the sign for about 20 minutes and looked around (sometimes at the Monarch Butterfly that was flying around it!), before dropping down on a fairly large vole.—*Ted Keyel, Sun Prairie, Wisconsin.*

WOOD THRUSH (*Hylocichla mustelina*)

14 April 2012, Estabrook Park, Milwaukee County—I was watching a pair of Hermit Thrushes flying low and perching ahead of me on the trail when I spotted the bird. It was perched, facing me, and only about 30 feet away. It was similar in size to, certainly no smaller than, a Hermit Thrush, but the top of its head was a bright reddish brown. Its chest and undersides were pure white. I immediately noticed bold, black dots on its chest, bigger and bolder than those of the nearby Hermit Thrushes. After the bird perched facing away from me, I saw that the reddish brown head color extended down its neck and back to the tail. I looked for but observed no contrast between the color of the tail and back.—*Charles Hagner, Shorewood, Wisconsin.*

WORM-EATING WARBLER (*Helmitheros vermivorum*)

23 May 2012, Pine Glen Gorge at Devil's Lake State Park, Sauk County—A small, drab passerine that was bigger than a kinglet, but smaller than a Yellow-breasted Chat. The most distinct marks on the body were crown stripes and a sharp eye-line. The bird had a heavy, sharply pointed pink bill, although not as heavy as a Yellow-breasted Chat. The head was rounded and had a warm, buff color with two black crown stripes and a bold, black eye-line creating an immense contrast on the head. The body had a rather chunky build for a warbler and the neck, breast, belly, flanks, and undertail coverts were solid buff in coloration. The color became a bit darker near the belly and flanks. The legs were short and pinkish in color. The back, wings, and upper part of the tail were a solid, drab olive in coloration. The wings appeared short and the tail was shorter in comparison to that of an American Redstart. The bird sang a thin, dry trill, much like that of a Chipping Sparrow. It stayed low in the vegetation and never got above 10 feet off the ground. It would sing, pop up and perch for a few moments and then go back in the scrub on the ground.—*Rob Pendergast, Plover, Wisconsin.*

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH (*Parkesia motacilla*)

1 April 2012, Stream near a group campground at Nelson Dewey State Park, Grant County—Relatively larger warbler with brown back, cap, and tail. White breast with brown streaks on lower breast and flanks (flanks had a slight buff wash to them). Head marked with a distinct white supercilium, and a bill longer than that of a Northern Waterthrush. It had pink legs. Was singing from a perch above the stream, flying down to stream, walking on the rocks in the streambed, and bobbing its tail. The bird sang repeatedly, a series of four slurred trills, ending with a rapid jumble of notes. The bird was also photographed..—*Cynthia Bridge, Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin.*

LE CONTE'S SPARROW (*Ammodramus leconteii*)

14 April 2012, Milwaukee County—Overall orange color with white belly.

The face was orange with a gray cheek patch. There was a black eye-line. The median crown stripe was white and the lateral crown stripes were dark brown. The flanks were thinly streaked in black. The gray nape had purple streaks. The background color of the upper parts was orange and they were darkly streaked. I observed this bird from about 25 feet away using 8×42 binoculars. The weather was clear, approximately 60 degrees F. and the wind was light out of the south.—*Thomas C. Wood, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin.*

Hoary Redpoll
(*Acanthis hornemanni*)

8 March 2012, At a feeder in St. Nazianz, Manitowoc County—One bird was feeding on a sock feeder and also on the ground. Nearby, for comparison, was a number of Common Redpolls. When the bird was feeding on the sock, I basically could see only the under tail area. The under tail area was totally free of any streaking of any sort. When the bird landed on the ground to feed, it was very frosty white in comparison to the other redpolls. The white seemed to shine out from this bird, while all the rest were duskier. The lower wing bar was very white and broader than on the other redpolls. This individual was also huskier than the others. Despite the larger size, the bill was noticeably smaller and shorter. It appeared as a dainty triangular shape. The pinkish-red color on the breast was paler than the other male redpolls. It also covered a smaller area and did not approach the face or go far onto the flanks. There was little, if any, streaking on the upper breast. There were thin, pale streaks along the flanks, but this did not extend to the bright white under tail coverts. This bird was likely at my feeder for a number of days, but I was never again able to get the good view that I had today.—*Robert C. Domagalski, St. Nazianz, Wisconsin.*

WSO Records Committee Report: Spring 2012

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The WSO Records Committee reviewed 93 records of 49 species for the Spring 2012 season, accepting 82 of them (88%). Highlights included the state's 7th Black Vulture, 7th Vermilion Flycatcher, 10th Brown Pelican, and 10th Golden-crowned Sparrow, as well as Chuck-will's-widow at a new Walworth County location, two Cinnamon Teals, two White-winged Doves, Ruff, Mississippi Kite, and five Plegadis ibis species (one Glossy, two White-faced, two unidentified). Although no species was record late, an unprecedented 24 species occurred on record or near-record early dates, most during the exceptional warmth spanning from mid-March to mid-April. All observers who submitted documentations were notified of the committee's decisions by e-mail.

Accepted Records

Table 1 provides a list of rare bird records accepted by the WSO Records Committee during the Spring 2012 season. Given the wealth of early arrival date records, these are listed separately in Table 2. Information on each record, such as species, location, observer(s), and date(s), is accompanied by the tally of votes made by the five-person committee. Records with one or fewer dissenting votes are accepted into the state records.

Table 1. List of rare bird records accepted by the WSO Records Committee during the Spring 2012 season. Accepted early arrival records are listed in Table 2. Numbers in right column represent the tally of votes by the five-person committee (accept – not accept).

Black Vulture (2012-004)—Plover, Portage County	
R. Pendergast, 11 April 2012	5–0
Black-necked Stilt (2012-006)—Findlay Rd VPA, Jefferson County	
C. Bridge, 3 May 2012 (photos, video)	5–0
T. Wood, 4 May 2012	5–0
Blue Grosbeak (2012-008)—Oak Creek, Milwaukee County	
B. Russart, 8 May 2012	5–0
Brown Pelican (2012-010)—St. Croix/Mississippi River, Polk/Pierce County	
R. Maercklein, 3 April 2012	5–0
T. Brashear, 8 April 2012 (photos)	5–0
D. Benz, 8 April 2012	5–0
Chuck-will's-widow (2012-011)—Black River State Forest, Jackson County	
J. Otto, 9 May 2012 (audio)	5–0
T. Wood, 18 May 2012	5–0
Chuck-will's-widow (2012-012)—Young Rd, Walworth County	
C. Bridge, 19 May 2012 (audio)	5–0
A. Stutz, 19 May 2012	5–0
D. Gustafson, 21 May 2012	5–0
Cinnamon Teal (2012-013)—6th Ave Marsh, Adams County	
M. Stephenson, 18 April 2012	5–0
R. Pendergast, 12 May 2012 (photos)	5–0
Cinnamon Teal (2012-014)—Vernon Marsh, Waukesha County	
H. Robertson, 29 April 2012 (photo)	5–0
J. Edlhuber, 29 April 2012 (photos)	5–0
T. Wood, 29 April 2012	5–0
J. Mooney, 30 April 2012 (photo)	5–0
Glossy Ibis (2012-019)—Van Patten Dr., Outagamie County	
R. Pendergast, 21 May 2012	4–1
Golden-crowned Sparrow (2012-020)—Bagley, Grant County	
B. Fortner, 23 April 2012 (photo, specimen)	5–0
Great Gray Owl (2012-021)—Hwy 35 near Belden Swamp, Douglas County	
T. Keyel, 18 May 2012	5–0
Hoary Redpoll (2012-024)—Hwy KK, Ozaukee County	
J. Mooney, 9 March 2012 (photos)	4–1
Hoary Redpoll (2012-064)—St. Nazianz, Manitowoc County	
B. Domagalski, 8 March 2012	5–0
Laughing Gull (2012-026)—North Point, Sheboygan County	
D. Freriks, 22 May 2012 (photos)	5–0
Mississippi Kite (2012-033)—White River SWA, Green Lake County	
D. Christensen, 7 May 2012	5–0
Plegadis ibis sp. (2012-041)—Horicon Marsh, Fond du lac/Dodge County	
D. Gustafson, 16 April 2012	5–0

Ruff (2012-045)—Cty V ponds, Dane County
T. Prestby, 13 May 2012 (photos) 5–0
T. Schultz, 13 May 2012 (photos) 5–0
T. Wood, 13 May 2012 5–0
C. Bridge, 13 May 2012 (photos) 5–0

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (2012-047)—Clintonville, Waupaca County
J. Schultz, 5–7 May 2012 5–0
D. Tessen, 7–8 May 2012 4–1
D. Belter, 8 May 2012 (photos) 5–0
T. Wood, 8 May 2012 5–0

Swainson's Hawk (2012-051)—west side Madison, Dane County
A. Paulios, 19 April 2012 5–0
M. McDowell, 19 April 2012 5–0

Vermilion Flycatcher (2012-053)—Lake Park, Milwaukee County
B. Hansen, 29 April 2012 (photo) 5–0
J. Mooney, 29 April 2012 (photos) 5–0
T. Wood, 29 April 2012 5–0

White-faced Ibis (#2012-055)—Hwy 29, Brown County
T. VerHaagh, 17 April 2012 (photo) 5–0
J. Trick, 17–18 April 2012 (photos) 5–0
D. Tessen, 18 April 2012 5–0
A. Sinkula, 19 April 2012 (photos) 5–0

White-faced Ibis (2012-057)—Lock and Dam Rd, Trempealeau County
D. Jackson, 23 April 2012 (photos) 5–0
T. Whitemarsh, 23 April 2012 (photos) 5–0

White-winged Dove (2012-058)—Cudahy, Milwaukee County
J. Ackerman, 3 May 2012 (photo) 5–0

White-winged Dove (2012-059)—Germantown, Washington County
J. Gulbrand, 19 April 2012 (photo) 5–0

An excellent comparison photo of a Ross's Goose with a Canada Goose was taken of the birds in the harbor at Ashland, Wisconsin (Ashland County) on 28 March 2012 by Ryan Brady.

Table 2. List of record or near-record early arrival records accepted by the WSO Records Committee during the Spring 2012 season. All records fall among the five earliest arrival dates known for each species. Accepted rare bird records are listed in Table 1. Numbers in right column represent the tally of votes by the five-person committee (accept – not accept).

American Avocet (2012-001)—Lowes Lake, Washington County	
B. Raffel, 12 April 2012 (early; photo)	5–0
American Golden-Plover (2012-002)—Palmyra, Jefferson County	
C. Bridge, 23 March 2012 (early; photos)	5–0
American White Pelican (2012-003)—Trempealeau, Trempealeau County	
D. Jackson, 5 March 2012 (early; photo)	5–0
Black-necked Stilt (2012-005)—Horicon Hwy 49, Dodge County	
M. Wanger, 6 April 2012 (early)	5–0
M. Huebschen, 6 April 2012 (early)	4–1
Broad-winged Hawk (2012-009)—Lake Waubesa, Dane County	
S. Thiessen, 9 April 2012 (early)	5–0
Dowitcher sp. (2012-015)—High Cliff SP, Calumet County	
A. Reimer, 8 April 2012 (early)	4–1
Dunlin (2012-016)—Coast Guard Impoundment, Milwaukee County	
J. Huf, 17 March 2012 (early)	5–0
J. Edlhuber, 17 March 2012 (early; photos)	5–0
Franklin's Gull (2012-018)—Trempealeau, Trempealeau County	
D. Jackson, 6 March 2012 (early; photo)	5–0
Greater Yellowlegs (2012-022)—Cty V ponds, Dane County	
K. Lindemer, 12 March 2012 (early; photos)	5–0
Henslow's Sparrow (2012-023)—Timber-Lee Christian Camp, Walworth County	
M. Nowak, 19 March 2012 (early)	4–1
Hudsonian Godwit (2012-025)—Zeloski Marsh, Jefferson County	
S. Thiessen, 19 April 2012 (early)	5–0
Lesser Yellowlegs (2012-027)—Shoeneberg Marsh, Columbia County	
T. Wood, 10 March 2012 (early)	5–0
Lincoln's Sparrow (2012-028)—Necedah NWR, Juneau County	
C. West, 14 March 2012 (early)	5–0
Lincoln's Sparrow (2012-029)—Schlitz Audubon Center, Milwaukee County	
M. Bontly, 13 March 2012 (early)	5–0
Louisiana Waterthrush (2012-030)—Nelson Dewey SP, Grant County	
C. Bridge, 1 April 2012 (early; photos)	5–0
Louisiana Waterthrush (2012-031)—Gov Dodge State Park, Iowa County	
C. Roethe, 26 March 2012 (early)	5–0
Northern Parula (2012-034)—Colonial Park, Racine County	
J. Wenzel, 6 April 2012 (early; photo)	5–0
Northern Rough-winged Swallow (2012-035)—Pheasant Branch, Dane County	
M. McDowell, 31 March 2012 (early)	5–0

Palm Warbler (2012-037)—Cottage Grove, Dane County
J. Schaufenbuel, 16 March 2012 (early) 4–1

Pine Warbler (2012-039)—Arena Boat Landing, Iowa County
A. Holschbach, 22 March 2012 (early) 5–0

Pine Warbler (2012-040)—Kettle Moraine SF, Waukesha County
D. Gustafson, 31 March 2012 (early) 5–0

Savannah Sparrow (2012-046)—New Berlin, Waukesha County
M. Korducki, 4 March 2012 (early) 5–0

Savannah Sparrow (2012-063)—Collins Marsh, Manitowoc County
B. Domagalski, 5–6 March 2012 (early) 5–0

Snowy Egret (2012-048)—Horicon Dike Rd, Dodge County
G. Masemore, 15 April 2012 (early; photo) 5–0
J. Mooney, 15 April 2012 (early; photo) 5–0
M. Bontly, 15 April 2012 (early; photo) 5–0
T. Wood, 15 April 2012 (early) 5–0

Sora (2012-049)—Lulu Lake, Walworth County
D. Gustafson, 18 March 2012 (early) 4–1

Summer Tanager (2012-050)—Lake Park, Milwaukee
J. Mooney, 16 April 2012 (early; photos) 5–0

Wood Thrush (2012-060)—Estabrook Park, Milwaukee County
C. Hagner, 14 April 2012 (early) 5–0

Yellow Rail (2012-061)—Lulu Lake, Walworth County
E. Howe, 28 March 2012 (early; audio) 5–0

Yellow-throated Warbler (2012-062)—Lake Park, Milwaukee County
S. Lubahn, 15 April 2012 (early; photos) 5–0
J. Mooney, 15 April 2012 (early; photos) 5–0

Records Not Accepted

In the header for each record, voting tallies are shown in parentheses. Votes to accept are listed first. Two or more dissenting votes from the five-person committee result in a Record Not Accepted.

Black-throated Gray Warbler— #2012-007, Lake Park, Milwaukee County, 9 May 2012 (1–4).

This bird was described having "white and black stripes on face," "a black band on throat," and "noticeable chest stripes and wing bars," as well as a white undertail. It was said to be larger than a chickadee with bigger bill and warbler-like behavior. The "black on head did not match Black-and-white Warbler" and the observer noted fewer side stripes than that species.

Unfortunately, this was the extent of the description, leaving doubt among the committee whether this was even a warbler, let alone this very rare species. The identification appears to rely heavily on the black and white stripes on the head and little else, with no mention of yellow loral spot, the bird's overall color, wingbar color and

extent, markings on the back/upperparts, or the location of the stripes on the face. This leaves a great deal of the bird undescribed and forces the committee to assume these features were consistent with the species claimed. Most committee members felt these gaps precluded acceptance of the record given that more common species like Black-and-white Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, or even Golden-winged Warbler were not adequately eliminated.

Forster's Tern—

#2012-017, Engel Conservation Area, Waukesha County, 28 March 2012 (early; 1–4).

The observer saw a white bird smaller than Ring-billed Gulls. First thought to be a white shorebird, it was then recognized as a small gull/tern. It had long, narrow, pointed wings that were "bright white at the primary tips." The mantle was pale gray but the head and bill were not seen as the bird was mostly seen flying away. The undersides of the bird were all white and the tail looked longer than on Bonaparte's Gulls.

The committee had concerns about the observer's apparently poor views of this bird. It was only seen flying away and the head and bill were not seen adequately. The observer him/herself struggled initially with whether this was a shorebird, gull, or tern. The identification appeared to rely heavily on the white primaries. As such, while the identification may have been correct, the committee was left hoping for more satisfactory looks at the bill, head, tail, and primary pattern to clinch this as a record early Forster's Tern.

Marsh Wren—

#2012-032, Grassy Lake SWA, Columbia County, 17 March 2012 (early; 1–4).

This bird was heard but not seen in small stands of cattails. It sang three times and was heard by two observers. However, there was no description of the sound/song heard, only that "all three songs were typical for that of a Marsh Wren." Dark-eyed Junco and Swamp Sparrow were eliminated by the observer because they "both give a trill but the Marsh Wren tends to be shorter and more liquid-sounding."

Despite the observers' extensive experience, the lack of any substantive information on the bird's vocalizations or appearance makes it impossible for the committee to accept this record as submitted. A more detailed description of the sounds heard (pattern, quality, tone, duration, etc.) is necessary for heard-only records such as this one.

Pacific Loon—

#2012-036, Rock Lake, Jefferson County, 20 April 2012 (2–3).

Seen at a distance of 0.6 miles under cloudy skies, this was a "small loon with a thin necklace." It had a "clear break between the white front and dark on the back of the neck," a "thin bill that MAY have had a slight tilt upward," uniformly dark upperparts except for a possibly lighter back, and "much white on the face," although the dark cap was said to have blended over the eye such that the latter could not be seen. No notching was seen on the side of the neck.

The committee did not accept this record largely because there was no suggestion in the documentation that

the similar Red-throated Loon was considered. The observer's indication of a bill that may have been upturned and a face with much white tend to favor that species over Pacific. Furthermore, a Red-throated Loon's eye can occasionally be "lost" in a diffuse dark cap and the back can appear uniformly dark when not seen well (e.g. at long distances). By the observer's own admission, this bird was "very distant" and, based on our experience, the committee was skeptical of the ability to see a necklace (chinstrap) at 0.6 miles away. These factors left too much uncertainty for some committee members to feel certain about the identification.

Palm Warbler—

#2012-038, Hoyt Park, Milwaukee County, 15 March 2012 (early; 0–5).

A very brief documentation indicated this bird had "dull yellow on the underparts and a brownish crown" and "the signature tail pumping/bobbing." While the identification may have been correct, this is a case where the written information provided (no photos) falls well short of satisfactorily describing the bird in question and eliminating other similar species. More details on size of the bird and the color, pattern, and location of its field marks are necessary.

Purple Martin—

#2012-042, Hwy 90/39, Dane County, 19 March 2012 (early; 1–4).

This bird was seen without optics along the shoulder of a major highway while driving, presumably at 60+ mph. The description was limited to "large size, dark color, and complete lack of white underparts/belly" and the bird's flight was said to be "distinctive." Unfortunately, no other details were provided and thus the committee could not confirm this was a swallow let alone a Purple Martin. There was no description of shape and the "distinctive" flight was not detailed beyond that single word. The lack of optics and driving at highway speeds also raise concerns about the accuracy of identification. Thus the committee could not rule out Starling, blackbirds, or other similar species.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird—

#2012-043, Madison, Dane County, 21 March 2012 (early; 0–5).

#2012-044, Wautoma, Waushara County, 7 April 2012 (early; 0–5).

The Madison bird was briefly seen without optics and described as "the unmistakeable size, flight pattern, and shape of the hummingbird." A green tint was noted as the bird flew to higher branches. No characteristics were seen to suggest some other hummingbird species. Similarly, the Wautoma bird was also seen without optics and described as a "typical male Ruby-throated Hummingbird" with "nothing . . . that led me to believe it was anything else." The observer repeatedly indicated he had "no doubt" of the identification but no additional information was provided.

Early Ruby-throated Hummingbird sightings are continually a point of controversy. Unfortunately, for some reason, most exceptionally early sightings are described exactly as above, i.e. very inadequately, with little to no detail on what the bird actually looked like. Neither of the above documentations allows a third party, i.e. this committee, to assess the bird's appearance

nor do they sufficiently eliminate other hummingbird species as possible identifications. So while the birds may be correctly identified, the documentations do not verify what was seen. Future observers are urged to avoid storytelling and elaborate on the bird's plumage features (e.g. gorget color, back color, and tail pattern) and structure (e.g. bill length, body size, length of the tail to the wingtips). And snapping some photos wouldn't hurt!

Swainson's Hawk—

#2012-052, Bong Recreation Area, Kenosha County, 15 April 2012 (0–5).

Similar in size to a Red-tailed Hawk, this bird had "very light underwing coverts with darker flight feathers." The chest had substantial streaking, and there was noticeable streaking in the underwing. The observer repeatedly referred to the bird's "teetering" behavior and indicated the plumage resembled an immature bird.

This description is too incomplete to verify as Swainson's Hawk. The observer him/herself seemed hesitant of the identification, which s/he made well after the fact based on the field marks they could remember seeing in the field. The bird was seen for less than a minute under overcast skies. Too much weight was placed on the dark/light underwing pattern but, aside from the tail being "too short for an accipiter," no mention was made of the bird's structure, proportions, body shape, etc, which are especially important in raptor identification. Furthermore, adult buteos typically migrate north before immature birds and mid-April would be rather early for this latter age class of Swainson's Hawks. Female Northern Harrier was not compared but fits the description, featuring darker flight feathers and streaked underparts, often "teetering" in flight, and regularly occurring over prairie habitat as reported.

Warbling Vireo—

#2012-054, Cedarburg Bog, Ozaukee County, 11 April 2012 (early; 0–5).

This bird was heard singing and only briefly seen. The song "resembled well the rapid-paced, somewhat buzzy, rising and falling warble typical of a Warbling Vireo." A fleeting distant glimpse revealed a nondescript bird with hint of pale yellow on sides, grayish upperparts, whitish underparts, and no wing bars or eyeline.

Heard-only records are notoriously difficult for observers to describe and records committees to assess. The song as vaguely described fits a variety of species and the visual observation was not detailed enough to confirm the identification either. Given this bird would be remarkably early, there are too many missing details on plumage, bill size/shape, behavior, and song pattern to eliminate similar species such as Bell's Vireo, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and others.

White-faced Ibis—

#2012-056, Potosi Point, Grant County, 21 April 2012 (photo/video; 2–3). **Accepted as Plegadis ibis species.*

This was a mallard-sized wading bird with dark plumage highlighted by greenish tint on the wings and maroon tint on the rest of the bird. It had a long slender neck and the legs were described as a "very dark red color." The bill was dark gray, 6–8″

long, and decurved. The observer focused hard on the face and base of bill and could see no white in the facial area, although s/he could see what they "believed to be pink facial skin." It was thought to be an adult ibis in non-breeding plumage.

The photos and video corroborate the observer's description but do not allow for a conclusive identification as White-faced or Glossy Ibis. Pink facial skin and reddish leg color suggest White-faced but the observer's own hesitancy and language raised concerns among some committee members that these were not conclusively seen. Non-breeding ibis that lack distinctive patterns of adults pose additional identification difficulty. As such, this record was accepted only as Plegadis ibis species and not to the species level.

White-crowned Sparrow was photographed by Bob Larson as it has a bite to eat.

Dennis Malueg caught take-off by this Mourning Warbler.

About the Artists

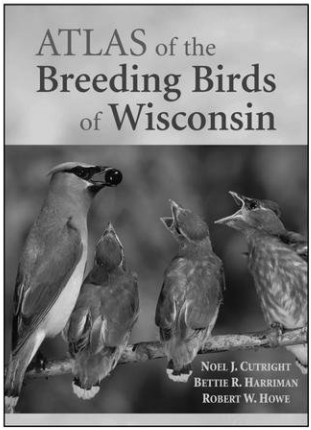
Dennis Connell from Nekoosa, Wisconsin, is an avid nature photographer. For the past 13 years he's been photographing wildlife and nature. Dennis enjoys digitally capturing wildlife doing what it is they do in their daily lives: feeding, nesting, courting, caring for the young, hunting, or whatever it is they need to do to preserve their species. His goal is to produce sharp clear images of the subject for himself and others to enjoy. You can see more images at: www.freewebs.com/dcimages

Stephen Fisher is a serious amateur photographer, enjoying both landscape and wildlife photography. He is a retired high school English teacher who worked as an environmental/wildlife educator and Education Director for the Raptor Education Group, Inc. (REGI) for seven years following his retirement from teaching in Wausau. He now serves as a volunteer at REGI, rescuing and/or transporting sick and injured birds. He and his wife, Evelyn, have always enjoyed and respected the natural world, and he has a special appreciation for birds, particularly raptors. He also enjoys traveling, reading, hiking, snowshoeing, observing wildlife, spending time at his cabin in northern Vilas County, walking his dogs in the wonderful Wisconsin outdoors, and lifelong learning.

Bob Larson, who lives in Kaukauna, is an advanced amateur photographer who concentrates his photography in the Fox Valley area. All nature centers and Haunts areas are fair game. Outagamie, Winnebago, Calumet, Brown, and Waushara Counties get the most attention. He switched to digital just before it became affordable and has been learning ever since.

Dave Lund is an amateur photographer who lives near Eau Claire. Following his retirement as a Mathematics Professor at UW-Eau Claire in 2000, he and his wife Judy now include birding and photography as part of all of their travels. Although many of his pictures are taken in Wisconsin, wintering in the southern US has provided many additional opportunities birding photography experiences. He has recently begun making presentations on birds and birding.

Dennis Malueg, Art Editor for *The Passenger Pigeon*, is a dedicated amateur bird and wildlife photographer who travels Wisconsin in search of his subjects. He also works from his own "studio"—his backyard, prairie, and forest in Waushara County.



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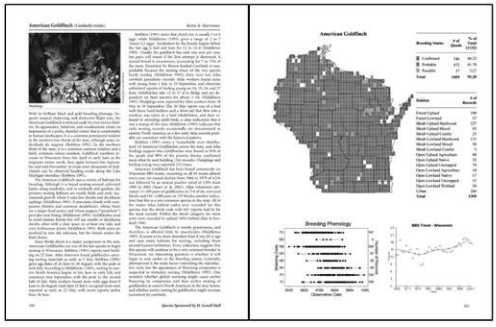

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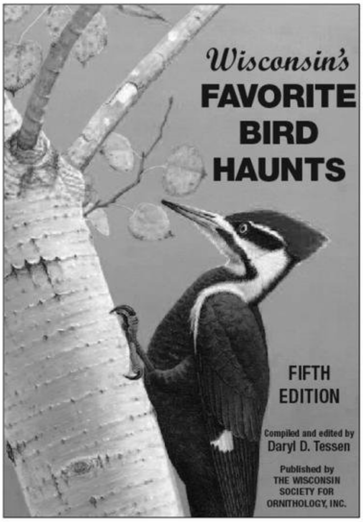

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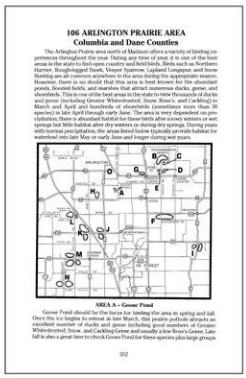
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Eastern Kingbird pictured by Steve Fisher.

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