

# **Late Spring Migration and Extralimital Summer Records of Migrant Birds in the Illinois Ozarks**

W. Douglas Robinson  
Department of Ecology, Ethology, and Evolution  
University of Illinois  
V. E. Shelford Vivarium, 606 E. Healey St.  
Champaign, IL 61820

Scott K. Robinson  
Illinois Natural History Survey  
607 E. Peabody Dr.  
Champaign, IL 61820

## **ABSTRACT**

We provide records of late spring migrant and summer vagrant birds in the Illinois Ozark region of southern Illinois. During three years (1989-1991) of intensive censuses, twenty migrant passerine species were encountered during late May or early June. Three other northern breeding passerine species were recorded in mid- and late June and are considered summer vagrants.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Many passerine species continue migrating through Illinois until late May or early June (Bohlen 1989). Because late departure dates of migrants are not as conspicuous as first arrivals each spring, the late spring migration has received little attention in the literature. Indeed, without regular systematic surveys it is difficult to document latest departure records for many species. Several songbird species that do not arrive in Illinois until mid-May have poorly defined migration periods for the same reasons.

The comprehensive extent of our surveys in extreme southern Illinois (see below) provided us with the opportunity to document late spring migration in forest habitats. Because Illinois forests are not often censused past the peak of spring migration, we feel we can supply some useful data on little known patterns of avian use of forests during late spring, and on the occurrence of summer vagrancy by some migrant birds that normally breed north of Illinois.

## STUDY AREA AND METHODS

We surveyed birds in four large (800-2,000 ha) forest tracts in Union and Alexander counties: the Dutch Creek area (T 12 S, R 2 W, sections 32-34); Pine Hills Hollow (T 11 S, R 3 W, sections 22, 27, 34; and, T 12 S, R 3 W, section 3); Trail of Tears State Forest (T 12 S, R 2 W, sections 4, 5, 7-9, 16-18); and South Ripple Hollow (T 14 S, R 2 W, sections 5 and 8). Oaks (*Quercus* spp.) and hickories (*Carya* spp.) dominate the ridges and slopes at all four sites. In the ravines, however, sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), and American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) are most common. The Dutch Creek area includes eight clearcuts and several maintained wildlife openings. Some sites at Trail of Tears State Forest have been selectively logged within the last 15 years. Pine Hills Hollow and South Ripple Hollow are mostly undisturbed, with the exception of a primitive campground near the south end of Pine Hills Hollow.

Each morning from 15 May-1 July, 1989-1991, we spent three to five hours censusing one or more of twenty-three routes through upland forest. These routes have four to thirty-one stops. We used a standard (Hutto et al. 1986) point-count census method with stops 150 meters apart. We spent six minutes at each stop recording distance and direction from the stop of each bird heard or seen. Each route was covered four times each summer.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Most migrant passerines have departed southern Illinois by May 20. Species lingering past this date are considered late migrants. We present here a summary of our latest records for many of the late migrant species that pass through the Illinois Ozarks (Table 1). In most cases, we include the two latest encounters for each species, but a few species were recorded after May 20 in only one year. Our censuses of forest habitat revealed record late departure dates for southern Illinois for eleven of the twenty late migrant species (see Table 1). Latest detections of other species were near previously published dates (Bohlen 1989; Graber et al. 1971, 1974, 1983, 1985).

Several additional sightings of migrant species cannot clearly be classified as late spring migrants. We consider the following to be summer vagrants:

Least Flycatcher (*Empidonax minimus*)--Three different singing males were present at three localities separated by at least one km during mid-summer 1991. Two were at Trail of Tears State Forest in selectively logged forest (24 and 25 June), whereas another was at Pine Hills Hollow in a disturbed section of a mesic ravine on 7 July. None were encountered earlier in the summer, and breeding has not been documented in southern Illinois (Graber et al. 1974). These birds may have been very early fall migrants.

Canada Warbler (*Wilsonia canadensis*)--A singing male with partial necklace, possibly a subadult, was at Trail of Tears in selectively logged forest on 22 June 1991. This individual was probably a late spring migrant, but the latest departure date for southern Illinois previously reported was 12 June (Graber et al. 1983).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*)--A singing male was recorded in undisturbed forest at Trail of Tears from 1-14 June 1991. Breeding has only recently

been confirmed in extreme southern Illinois, but there are as yet no nesting records for the Illinois Ozark region (Robinson 1991).

Evening Grosbeak (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*)--A flying bird was heard and seen during a census of an upland ridge at Dutch Creek on 14 June 1991. To our knowledge, this is one of only three June records for the state (Bohlen 1989).

The results from our censuses help define more fully the migration periods for late migrant species passing through southern Illinois. Daily censuses throughout May and early June are necessary to document the entire migration period for each passerine species migrating through Illinois. Regular surveys not only provide important natural history information about migration periods, but can also record summer vagrancy patterns, a topic about which little is known. Summer vagrancy may be an indicator of potential for the establishment of future breeding populations.

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Table 1. Latest spring departure dates for migrants recorded in the Illinois Ozarks. Species follow A.O.U. (1983) order. Asterisks (\*) indicate those species for which record late departure dates were recorded.

Species	latest date(s)	site <sup>b</sup>	forest type <sup>c</sup>
Olive-sided Flycatcher ( <i>Contopus borealis</i> )	31 May 1989	DC	uncut ridge
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher*	1 June 1990	TOT	uncut ridge
( <i>Empidonax flaviventris</i> )	1 June 1990	TOT	uncut ridge
Veery*	3 June 1991	PHH	uncut ravine
( <i>Catharus fuscescens</i> )	8 June 1988 <sup>a</sup>	DC	disturbed ravine
Gray-cheeked Thrush*	30 May 1990	TOT	ridge with clearcuts
( <i>C. minimus</i> )	29 May 1989	PHH	uncut ravine
Swainson's Thrush*	30 May 1991	TOT	disturbed ridge
( <i>C. ustulatus</i> )	31 May 1990	TOT	uncut ridge
Philadelphia Vireo*	31 May 1991	DC	disturbed bottomland
( <i>Vireo philadelphicus</i> )	25 May 1989	DC	uncut bottomland
Tennessee Warbler*	7 June 1990	DC	disturbed ravine
( <i>Vermivora peregrinus</i> )	29 May 1991	PHH	uncut ravine
Chestnut-sided Warbler	29 May 1989	PHH	uncut ravine
( <i>Dendroica pensylvanica</i> )	31 May 1990	DC	uncut ridge
Magnolia Warbler	29 May 1989	PHH	disturbed ravine
( <i>D. magnolia</i> )	27 May 1991	TOT	uncut ravine
Yellow-rumped Warbler*	24 May 1990	TOT	uncut ridge
( <i>D. coronata</i> )			
Black-throated Green Warbler	29 May 1989	PHH	uncut ravine
( <i>D. virens</i> )	29 May 1991	SRH	uncut ravine

Blackburnian Warbler* ( <i>D. fusca</i> )	31 May 1990	TOT	uncut ridge
Blackpoll Warbler* ( <i>D. striata</i> )	7 June 1991	DC	uncut ridge
American Redstart ( <i>Setophaga ruticilla</i> )	1 June 1991	DC	disturbed bottomland
Connecticut Warbler ( <i>Oporornis agilis</i> )	10 June 1991	TOT	uncut ridge
Mourning Warbler ( <i>O. philadelphia</i> )	29 May 1989	PHH	uncut ridge
Wilson's Warbler* ( <i>Wilsonia pusilla</i> )	30 May 1990	SRH	disturbed ravine
Canada Warbler ( <i>W. canadensis</i> )	30 May 1990	DC	ridge with clearcuts
Rose-breasted Grosbeak ( <i>Pheucticus ludovicianus</i> )	7 June 1990	DC	disturbed ridge
White-throated Sparrow* ( <i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i> )	3 June 1991	DC	disturbed ridge
	27 May 1991	TOT	uncut ridge
	29 May 1989	PHH	disturbed ridge
	27 May 1991	TOT	uncut ridge
	29 May 1989	PHH	uncut ravine
	1 June 1990	TOT	uncut ridge
	7 June 1990	TOT	disturbed ridge

<sup>a</sup> detected during preliminary surveys in 1988.

<sup>b</sup> D C = Dutch Creek area; P H H = Pine Hills Hollow; S R H = South Ripple Hollow;  
T O T = Trail of Tears State Forest.

<sup>c</sup> "disturbed" includes sites selectively logged or clearcut within the last 15 years.  
"uncut" has not been logged in at least 40 years.