

of the birding knowledge of many Chicagoans to the present day. It is a pleasure to have had the opportunity to share it with you.

The concluding table summarizes the big day counts run by Clark between those years.

References Cited

Greenberg, J., "Notes On A Big Day, Or How I Spent My Spring Migration," **Illinois Birds and Birding**, vol. 1, no. 1, Jan.-Mar., 1985, pp. 8-9.

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Illinois' First Scrub Jay

by ROBERT CHAPEL and ELIZABETH CHATO

The Champaign County Audubon field trip to Illinois Beach State Park on 29 September 1984 was not going well. The trip had been billed as a hawk-watching trip and we had seen very few hawks. With virtually no hawk movement, Bob Chapel decided to take the group on a walk through the Sand Prairie at the south end of Illinois Beach to the area of pines just north of the prairie.

When we reached the pines in the early afternoon, Beth Chato spotted a rather large passerine with the unusual color combination of blue and brown sitting in the top of a pine and called out, "what's that!" Bob looked up speechless for a second, then yelled "Scrub Jay!" Beth being familiar with this species in the western states quickly concurred.

Although the Scrub Jay remained in view for barely a minute, Beth and Bob were able to get an excellent look at the bird in good light from a distance of about 100 feet. Beth Chato had 8 × 40 binoculars and Bob Chapel had 10 × 40 binoculars. George Mozurkewich, an inexperienced observer on the field trip, also observed the bird. The Scrub Jay was turned slightly away from a straight profile to us, so that we could not see the breast band nor white throat clearly. The back was a dull tan, contrasting distinctly with the blue of the wings, tail, and head, thus separating the bird from the Gray-breasted Jay. The Scrub Jay also had a dusky mask through the eyes, and a rather long, heavy jay-like bill. Overall, the Scrub Jay was similar in size to a Blue Jay but slimmer and longer tailed. The bird was more washed-out in appearance than most field guide illustrations depict, indicating to us that the bird was of the interior race shown in the National Geographic Society's **Field Guide to the Birds of North America** (1984). Subsequent observers concurred with our opinion that the bird was of the interior race.

After we notified the Chicago Area Rare Bird Alert, Richard Biss was the first observer to see the bird, on the evening of 29 September. Subsequently, the Scrub Jay was observed by many observers. It remained at Illinois Beach

State Park until at least 30 October 1984. Most observers noted that the bird was quite wary and exhibited no feather wear. There was nothing in its appearance or behavior to suggest that it was not a wild bird.

The appearance of the Scrub Jay in Illinois was not expected, since it is supposedly non-migratory. However, like some other non-migratory Corvids (such as Steller's Jay and Clark's Nutcracker), it may range widely in search of food in the fall. September 1984 brought early heavy snows to the Rocky Mountain region in the range of the interior



The Scrub Jay at Illinois Beach State Park. Photos by Joe Milosevich, 1 Oct. 1984.

ranges of the Scrub Jay, thus likely forcing many Scrub Jays out of their normal range. A fall 1984 dispersal of Scrub Jays and other Corvids was reported in several western states as well.

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(Note: Should anyone have additional information or photographs of this jay, please forward them to the editor. Thank you.)