

## November

November is the month for zooties. It is the most likely month in which to find Pacific, Red-throated and/or Yellow-billed Loon, Western, Clark's, Red-necked and/or Eared Grebe, any scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Parasitic or Pomarine Jaeger, Prairie Falcon, Northern Shrike, Snow Bunting, Red or White-winged Crossbill or Common Redpoll. In the unlikely event that a Mountain Bluebird, Townsend's Solitaire or Bohemian Waxwing shows up in Missouri, it has a better chance of showing up in November than any other month. Gulls from the north, like Glaucous, Iceland, Thayer's and Great and Lesser Black-backed, usually do not arrive until ice drives them our way, but November is one of the likeliest months for a Black-legged Kittiwake, California Gull, Little Gull or Common Black-headed Gull. Almost any western stray can show up in this month. If and when the first Long-billed Murrelet occurs in Missouri, it will probably appear in November.

November is also the month during which the later fall migrants come through. Whereas, October was the time for *Spizella* sparrows like Chipping, Field and Clay-colored, and *Ammodramus* sparrows like Le Conte's and Nelson's Sharp-tailed, Harris, White-crowned and Fox Sparrows come through in force in November, and Tree Sparrows arrive to spend the winter then. November is a good month to pick up Rusty and Brewer's Blackbirds, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Pine Siskin and Smith's and Lapland Longspurs. Short-eared Owls return in November, as probably also do Long-eared and Saw-whet Owls. American Goldeneye, Bufflehead and the mergansers come back in this month, as do the bulk of the diving ducks and large flocks of Snow Geese.

Just as the focus of birding shifted to the grasslands for *Ammodramus* sparrows in October, it shifts again in November to open bodies of water like lakes, sewage lagoons and the Mississippi River for loons, grebes and ducks, and to pine groves for owls and winter finches. November is the month to go to REDA and to hit Smithville Lake, Thomas Hill Reservoir, Stockton Lake, Table Rock Lake and even smaller lakes like Mozingo, Jacomo, the Maryville Sewage lagoons and Lake Contrary. It is also a good time to cover reliable spots for Smith's Longspurs, like Bradford Farms in Boone County or Taberville Prairie in St. Clair County. Birders who lack Snow Bunting, Prairie Falcon and Northern Shrike should consider a November trip to the northwestern portion of the state.

November is the month to plug the final gaps in the Year List. But most of all, November is the month in which to expect the unexpected!

**Bob Fisher**