

A friendly reminder . . .

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The Ohio Cardinal is a quarterly publication devoted to the study and appreciation of Ohio's birdlife.

The Ohio Cardinal exists to provide a permanent and timely record of the abundance and distribution of birds in Ohio; to help document the occurrence of rare species in the state; to provide information on identification of birds; and to provide information on birding areas within Ohio.

The Ohio Cardinal invites readers to submit articles on unusual occurrences of birds, bird distribution within the state, birding areas in Ohio, identification tips, and other aspects of ornithology. Bird reports and photographs are welcome from any area of the state. Report forms are not a necessity but will be supplied upon request. Unusual species should be documented, and forms to do so are available upon request from the Editor, Publisher, and Records Committee Secretary.

Seasonal Report Due Dates Winter (Dec.-Feb.)—March 25 Spring (Mar.-May)—June 25 Summer (June-July)—August 25 Autumn (Aug.-Nov.)—December 25	Please send all reports to: Bill Whan 223 E. Tulane Road Columbus, OH 43202 billwhan@columbus.rr.com
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The Ohio Cardinal

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On the Cover: This male black-necked stilt joined a female in protesting the presence of observers at Big Island Wildlife area, where the pair was strongly suspected of nesting. Photo by Troy Shively 7 June 2004.

Summer 2004 Overview and Reports

Bill Whan

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As someone who solicits and gathers reports of birds, your editor can testify to a noticeable drop-off in information received during each summer season. Perhaps it is because in the world of birds the joyful play of courtship has become the hard work of nest-building and rearing young, the adventure and constant change of migration have shrunk to a tiny territory in an insecure locale, and a familiar cast of old neighbors greets us each day rather than a racy parade of exotic strangers. Local breeders, already familiar from spring, can literally and figuratively fade into the background, growing more silent and furtive, and after nesting many slip away without a farewell, even the times of their inconspicuous departures unnoticed.

Only three Review Species were reported this summer, all of them having been reported during the spring as well: Mississippi kite, black-necked stilt, and loggerhead shrike. All the same there was plenty of excitement, more than usual. In part this was because communications among observers have greatly improved. It is possible today to convey a photographic image of a bird from the field directly to one of several internet sites capable of sharing it publicly in minutes. Nearly everyone now regards interesting news about birds as something to share with everyone. Though they have not disappeared completely, the old in-group and back-channel communications are withering away. More and more resources are available to help beginners learn from more experienced birders as well as from the birds themselves, and this means more reliable reports from the field. A more open democratic atmosphere, rich in learning opportunities, has led to a more complete and accurate record of our bird life.

Rather than rare strays, it was nesting birds—with nesting confirmed, probable, or just strongly suspected—that dominated the news. This is as it should be, for birds who do not reproduce their kind but instead wander the countryside delighting list-keepers are taking themselves out of the survival game. King rails defied accepted doctrine and reproduced in three counties near the center of the state. Herring gulls fledged young down near the Ohio River for the first time. A substantial number of black terns nested in the northwest marshes, and later swept across the state in numbers unrecorded for twenty years. Bell's vireos outdid themselves: often restricted to a pair or two at one familiar location, they appeared in four counties this summer. Blue grosbeaks were all over the map, with records in six counties well north of their accustomed haunts, breeding in four of them. Sedge wrens, often inconspicuous and unpredictable, showed up in at least eleven counties. Black-necked stilts almost certainly nested in Ohio for the first known time, and while this nest was probably destroyed by torrential rains stilts made as many as six appearances in the state, a record. Unprecedented numbers of prothonotary warblers

bred in an assisted and well-monitored population near Hoover Reservoir. We had our first confirmed nesting by the golden-winged warbler since 1991. Finally, a bird that may have resulted from a significant nesting—a possible hybrid between northern parula and cerulean warbler—was well studied in Toledo during the season. Notes on the latter three occurrences appear in this issue, and details for all the rest appear below as well.

The summer was a bit cooler than normal, without wild variations in temperature; we suffered only three days at 90 degrees or above in the center of the state. Our wet May was followed by a wet June, with rains more than 30% above normal, and a wetter July, with rains nearly 40% above normal. Returning shorebirds in the second half of Jul found water far too deep for foraging in many places, and records show most sightings on beaches along the Lake (prominently Conneaut, its habitat much reduced from last year's) as well in reservoirs and even riverbanks inland. Observers in the Arctic warned that an uncharacteristically cold summer had led to very low productivity among many shorebird species, and we were asked to keep track of the numbers of juveniles seen later in the year. In the Old World, prey species had moved so far north that hundreds of thousands of northern hemisphere seabirds apparently failed to breed. These things happen in the natural world; if, however, they begin to happen more often in a world made less natural because of our increasingly significant presence, then birds, and we ourselves by implication, are in trouble.

Corrigenda: Corrections to the previous issue (Vol 27, No. 3) follow.

In "The 2003-04 Christmas Bird Counts" the lines with counts for field sparrow and lark sparrow, on pp 120-121 and on pp 126-277, were mistakenly transposed; to correct this, please interchange the species names in the first column.

Long-tailed Duck: Omitted were four at Oberlin Res 27 Mar (C.Caldwell).

Piping Plover: The photographer who contributed the image was Paul Gardner.

For the Record: Here are noteworthy records that for one reason or another escaped our timely notice, and are presented for the public records :

Greater Scaup: A hen out of season at Fairport Hbr 24 May 2004 (R. Hannikman).

Wilson's Phalarope: Female photographed at Lorain 11 May 2004 (R. Nicholls).

Glaucous Gull: A second-summer bird at HBSP 15 May 2004 (R. Hannikman).

Cliff Swallow: Setting yet another early arrival record for the state was one at A.

Troyer's n. Holmes farm on 20 Mar 2004.

"Lawrence's Warbler": A male visited Holmes 13 May 2004 (J. Beechy).

Painted Bunting: A male photographed in Medina 9 May 2004. Details to the OBRC.

The Reports follow the nomenclature and taxonomic order of the 7th edition of the *AOU Check-list of North American Birds* (1998), including the 45th Supplement (July 2004). Underlined names of species indicate those on the OBRC Review List;

documentation is needed to add reports of these species to official state records, or to attributed records in the Reports. When supplied, county names appear *italicized*. Unless numbers are specified, sightings refer to single birds. Abbreviations, conventions, and symbols used in the Reports should be readily understood, with the possible exceptions of the following: ad=adult; alt=alternate (breeding) plumage; BCSP=Buck Ck SP in *Clark*; BIWA=Big Isl WA in *Marion*; BSBO=Black Swamp Bird Observatory; CCE= Crane Ck estuary in ONWR; CVNP=Cuyahoga Valley Natl Pk in *Cuyahoga* and *Summit*; Dike 14=the Gordon Park impoundment in Cleveland; EFSP=East Fork SP in *Clermont*; eop=end of the period, in this case 31 Jul 2004; EHSP=East Hbr SP in *Ottawa*; fide= "in trust of," said of data conveyed on behalf of another person; Gilmore Ponds is in *Butler*; GLSM=Grand Lk St Marys in *Mercer/Auglaize*, HBSP=Headlands Beach SP in *Lake*; HBSNP=Headlands Beach SNP in *Lake*; HWSP=Hueston Wds SP (*Butler/Preble*); imm=immature; Killbuck=Killbuck Marsh WA in *Wayne/Holmes*; KPWA=Killdeer Plains WA in *Wyandot*; LSR=Lakeshore Reservation (MP) in *Lake*; Magee=Magee Marsh WA in *Ottawa/Lucas*; MBSP=Maumee Bay SP in *Lucas*; MP=Metropark; m obs=many observers; MWW=Miami-Whitewater Wetlands in *Hamilton*; NWR=National Wildlife Refuge; OBRC=Ohio Bird Records Committee; ODO=Ohio Division of Wildlife; ONWR=Ottawa NWR in *Ottawa/Lucas*; ONWRC=monthly bird census at ONWR; PCWA=Pickerel Ck WA in *Sandusky*; ph=photograph, Res=Reservoir; Res'n=Reservation; SF=State Forest; SNP=State Nature Preserve; SP=State Park; SVWA=Spring Valley WA in *Greene/Warren*; WA=Wildlife Area.

Summer 2004 Reports

Cackling Goose: The big news of the season is the American Ornithologists' Union's announcement of a split among forms of Canada goose *Branta canadensis*. A new species, *B. hutchinsii*, with English name Cackling Goose, comprises five subspecies of smaller-bodied geese of the high Arctic: *B. c. hutchinsii*, *B. c. asiatica*, *B. c. leucopareia*, *B. c. taverneri*, and *B. c. minima*. There are over 50 published Ohio records that probably refer to this new species, including several supported by specimens. Inconveniently, the AOU hints that further splits in the "white-cheeked goose" complex may be in the offing. This will mean that many historical records of small geese may be indeterminable as to species, and that field identification criteria for new species in the complex will be in flux for some time. Meanwhile, field workers are urged to study the literature on recognized *B. canadensis* subspecies, and prepare careful documentation of observations.

Canada Goose: This species, still *Branta*



The small goose in the foreground wintered at Blendon Woods MP 13 Dec. 1973 through 8 Apr 1974, and is likely of the newly-split species cackling goose *Branta hutchinsii*. Jim Fry points out the small size and short neck and bill relative to accompanying *Branta canadensis interior*, and states the white cheek patches were completely separated by the black chin. Photo by Mike Flynn.

canadensis, now consists only of larger-bodied subspecies of more southerly distribution, including *B. c. canadensis*, *B. c. interior* (our most frequent migrant), *B. c. maxima* (Ohio's resident form, and by far our most numerous), *B. c. moffitti*, *B. c. parvipes*, *B. c. fulva*, and *B. c. occidentalis*. Again, since the AOU advises us to prepare for possible future splits in this new group, it seems prudent to learn how to discriminate all these subspecies if possible, and take careful notes. As for our resident geese, the ONWRC had 669 on 4 Jul.

Mute Swan: This year only two families at Medusa Marsh, seen 2 Jul by **J. Lehman**.

Wood Duck: **K. Metcalf** observed woodies at N. Chagrin MP in *Cuyahoga*, noting them (1) eating small frogs and tadpoles, (2) crowding to eat sunflower seed at feeders, and (3) attempting—before staff intervened—to eat juvenal little brown bats fallen from a roost. Wood ducklings eat a lot of animals, but vertebrates in their diet are little known.

Gadwall: A drake lingered at BIWA 12 Jun (**R&S Harlan**), and six were a surprise at Conneaut 6 July (**C. Holt**).

American Wigeon: The ONWRC had six at Ottawa 4 Jul.

Blue-winged Teal: Small numbers paddled the larger marshes through the period, such as three broods in evidence at MWW by 3 Jul (**P. Wharton**).

Northern Shoveler: One remained in Findlay 1 Jun (**B. Hardesty**). A pair was at Pickerington Ponds near Columbus 7 Jun (**J. Watts**), and **S&R Harlan** observed a pair at BIWA 12 Jun.

Northern Pintail: **B. Powell** found one at BIWA 7 Jun, **G. Miller** one in *Adams* 9 Jun, and **S. Snyder** two dawdling drakes at Funk WA 27 Jun.

Green-winged Teal: A lone drake was at Funk WA 27 Jun (**S. Snyder**), two at Pipe Ck WA 2 Jul (**J. Lehman**), and another drake at Ottawa 4 Jul for the ONWRC.

Redhead: One at ONWR on 18 Jul was a surprise (**B. Zwiebel**).

Ring-necked Duck: Females at Killbuck WA 3 Jun (**S. Snyder**) and in *Darke* 8 Jun (**R. Schieltz**) were less remarkable than a pair at Slate Run in *Pickaway* 16 Jun (**C. Morrow fide J. Watts**), a drake at ONWR 19 (**Snyder**) and 21 Jun (**J. Lehman**) and 4 Jul (OWNRC), another at Highbanks MP in *Delaware* since spring (**R. Lowry**), and still another in *Holmes* 25 Jul (**Snyder**).

Hooded Merganser: Fewer broods reported than usual. Four females from mid-Jun through late Jul were first summer records for *Gallia* (**H. Slack**).

Common Merganser: **L. Rosche** observed a hen at Shalersville, *Portage* 2 Jun.

Red-breasted Merganser: One navigated a Findlay Res 1 Jun (**B. Hardesty**).

Ruddy Duck: As in the past two summers, unusual numbers of adults lingered around the state (in *Erie*, *Hancock*, *Lucas*, *Madison*, *Marion*, *Ottawa*, and *Wyandot* at least), with no breeding confirmed. High count six, at Upper Sandusky Res 6 Jun, with three there through the eop (**R. Counts**).

Common Loon: Eight imm/basic birds and one alt were reported from inland reservoirs during the first week of Jun. A few lingered, such as imm loons at seen at Woodbury WA 24 Jun (**S. Hull**) and one in Findlay as late as 13 Jul (**B. Hardesty**).

Pied-billed Grebe: Broods reported across the state, and a high count of 33 at BIWA 25 Jun (**T. Shively**).

American White Pelican: The vacationing first-summer bird from early May in *Mahoning* remained through the eop (**B. Jones**). A quartet found Metzger Marsh to their liking 19 (**A. Osborn**) through 23 Jun (**E. Tramer**). One overflow CPNWR 27 Jun (**Tramer**).

Double-crested Cormorant: Away from the Lake Erie nesting colonies, many inland reservoirs hosted modest numbers, mostly immature birds, with a high count of 50+ at Knox Lk 31 Jul (**D. Plant**).

American Bittern: Few detected outside the western Lake Erie marshes, but in the south one stalked MWW 17 Jul (**F. Frick**), and the species was present summer-long at Pymatuning Fen in *Ashtabula* (**J. Bissell fide S. Zadar**).

Least Bittern: As the above. One was in the Pleasant Valley Marsh of the CVNP during the period (**D.**

Chasar), another at Pymatuning Fen in *Ashtabula* (**J. Bissell fide S. Zadar**). Not often reported from BIWA, but one was spotted 17 Jul (**R. Sempier**).

Great Blue Heron: Even after severe wind damage in May, 302 nests persisted in 89 trees at the Lordstown colony in *Trumbull* 24 Jun (**C. Babyak**). By 17 Jul, liberated from parental duties, 120+ parted at a BIWA impoundment (**R. Sempier**). The Akron Aud Soc survey of *Summit* 11-20 Jun found a record 502 GBHs (**fide A. Chasar**).

Great Egret: Sixty-five joined the above-mentioned herons (**Sempier**) at BIWA, and 160 tallied on the 4 Jul ONWRC. Five at Gilmore Ponds, *Butler*, on the odd date of 1 June were intriguing (**M. Busam**). In many other wetlands, egrets gathered late Jun-eop; interestingly one of the four at Funk WA on 27 Jun was carrying a stick in its bill (**S. Snyder**).

Snowy Egret: Reports restricted to the Lake Erie marshes, and in normal numbers. High counts 16 for the 4 Jul ONWRC and 11 at Pickerel Ck WA 21 Jul (**S. Zadar**).

Little Blue Heron: Joining post-nesting wandering Ardeidae were young birds seen singly at Medusa Marsh 21 Jul (**S. Zadar**) and at Delaware Res 23 Jul (**J. McCormac**).

Cattle Egret: Two migrants as late as 2 Jun at Pickerington Ponds near Columbus were the only noteworthy report (**J. Watts**).

Green Heron: The AOU announced a new scientific name for this species: it is now *Butorides striata*. We can look forward to such gender-related grammatical tinkering every year now, as the AOU has elected to inconvenience us all by dribbling them out a few at a time.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: **J. Pimentel** reminded us the largest numbers in Columbus can be near the 5th Ave bridge over the Olentangy, with six there 20 Jul. As many as eight visited the Shaker Lks during the second half of July (**L. Deininger**). At Magee, **H&S Hiris** counted 22 on 20 Jun.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: The Columbus pair showed off three or four young 9 Jun, with a lone adult seen at the site 28 Jun (both **A. Paschall**). A single bird enjoyed MBSP 17 (**D. Bollin**) through 25 Jun (**E. Tramer**).

Black Vulture: Unusual venues included the Columbus Zoo, with three overhead 24 Jun (**J. White**), and Gallipolis, with one 22 Jul (**H. Slack**). High count 25 in *Clermont* 3 Jul (**D. Morse**).

Osprey: A success story. This year 31 pairs fledged 50 young (last year the numbers were 22 and 31 respectively). Since its inception in 1996, 183 birds in the Division of Wildlife's reintroduction project have successfully fledged from Ohio nests, and 282 from hack boxes; the hacking program has been now discontinued (**D. Sherman**).

Mississippi Kite: Amid a spate of occurrences from adjacent states, one was reported from Kenwood, *Hamilton* 4 Jun; details are being sought by the OBRC.

Bald Eagle: Doing well. The high count was 42, unusual for 2 Jul, at Metzger (**J. Lehman**); 40 of these birds were youngsters, a gang of sorts.



A surprising yellow-crowned night heron put on a great show behind the Nature Center at Maumee Bay SP, where Jay Lehman digiscoped this image in low light late on 16 June from the boardwalk.



One of two adults among 42 bald eagles at Metzger Marsh WA 2 July. Photo by Jay Lehman.

Northern Harrier: Confirmed as breeding at The Wilds (**A. Parker**). Unreported from some of the late spring locations, but new areas emerged, such as MBSP 7 Jun (**E. Tramer**), NW Williams 20 Jun (**Tramer**), Hancock 22 Jun (**B. Sams fide B. Hardesty**) and Hardin (**R. Counts**) season-long, plus a number of spots in the south, including an adult in Clermont 6 Jul (**B. Stanley**), a female in Brown 17 Jul (**B. Foppe**), one at Magee 18 Jul (**H&S Hiris**) and another in NE Clinton 24 and 25 Jul (**B. Powell**).

Red-shouldered Hawk: **E. Tramer** relates the following: "Six were observed cartwheeling in the air over NW Williams Co. June 20, feeding on 17-year cicadas. A Cooper's hawk, a red-tailed hawk, and at least two kestrels were observed doing the same thing. Clearly, raptors were taking advantage of this superabundant prey base."

Merlin: An adult spotted at LSR 16 Jul (**J. Pogacnik**) was most likely an early migrant.



One of the Prairie Oaks MP king rails escorted one of the chicks out into the open on 21 July for photographer Bob Powell.

King Rail: Big news here. Over the past several decades, nearly all king rail nesting records have come from western Lk Erie marshes, with the exception of a few from BIWA. This summer the more familiar reports were received, such as of two heard at Mallard Club Marsh 2 Jul (**J. Lehman**). However, two seen in an agricultural wetland in Pickaway 5 Jul (**R. Rogers, B. Sparks**) led to the discovery of four by 11 Jul (**Lehman**); **T. Shively** had this spring noticed a decayed roadkill at the site which he identified as a large rail, and on 23 Jul **D. Horn** reported one or two king rails at Calamus Swamp, an equally suitable wetland only 3 1/2 mi to the north, which may

or may not have been from among these birds. On 18 Jul **J. Watts** announced the discovery several days earlier by Franklin Co. Metroparks staff of a king rail family at Prairie Oaks MP in Madison. Three downy young were seen by m obs there through 20 Jul, and two persisted through the eop. Eight days later adult and juvenile king rails were found at KPWA, establishing nesting during the summer period there (**R. Sempier**); this is probably the first confirmed nesting at this site. Finally **J. Bissell** (*fide S. Zadar*) noted a summering king rail at Pymatuning Fen in Ashtabula while working there.

Virginia Rail: One or more was seen 19 Jun-eop near Hoover Res in Delaware (**C. Bombaci**, m obs). In Wayne, one was at Funk WA 27 Jun, and one found dead 25 Jul at Killbuck WA (both **S. Snyder**). Two territories were detected at GRWA 3 Jun (**C. Babyak**), and one seen at Pickerel CK WA 2 Jul and another at BIWA 19 Jul (both **J. Lehman**). A single bird in Findlay photographed 4 July (*fide W. Hull*) may possibly have been injured, but appeared in good shape by mid-month (**B. Hardesty**).

Sora: Decent numbers were heard and occasionally seen in the usual wetland haunts. The two Pickaway

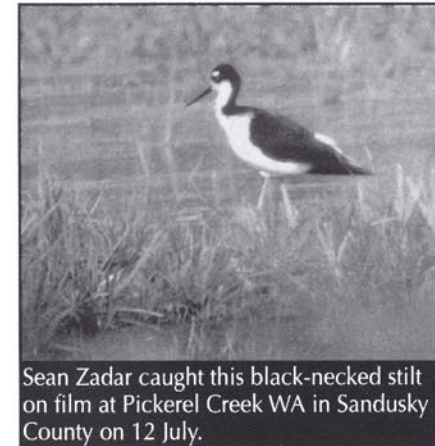
sites occupied by king rails (see above) also hosted soras, with as many as 20 at Calamus Swamp (m obs).

Common Moorhen: Numbers at the ONWR stronghold seemed down, with a local high count of one (21 Jun, **J. Lehman**), nor were customary numbers reported from BIWA. Elsewhere, one was at PCWA 20 Jul (**N. Bixler**), and the state high counts reported were an anemic two, at GRWA 5 Jun (**K. Metcalf**) and at Killbuck WA 8 Jul (**S. Snyder**).

American Coot: Out-of-the-way nesting spots were Pickerington Ponds, where **J. Watts** noted probable young with a pair 2 Jun, and Upper Sandusky Res, where **S. Snyder** found a pair with two young 3 Jul. High counts 17 at BIWA 12 Jun (**R&S Harlan**) and 21 (including at least 11 young) for the 4 Jul ONWRC.

Sandhill Crane: **R. Counts** reported a lone bird 6 Jun-eop in Wyandot. One roamed to Erie 8 Jun (**J. Bednarik**), and two probable adults dropped down at BIWA 28 Jun (**B&C Long**). *Geauga* records continued with two adults and a colt near Burton 20 Jun (**R. McCullough**). Near Funk WA, reports of two adults and two colts persisted through the eop (m obs). Two adults and a colt in Williams 28 Jun (**J. Pogacnik**) were found at a location where families have been reported in recent years by **J. Grabmeier**.

Black-bellied Plover: Not an early migrant: single laggards were found at ONWR 21 Jun (**J. Lehman**) and possibly the same bird 22 Jun at Metzger (**N. Bixler**). An accelerated returnee was over Norton 14 Jul (**R. Harlan**).



Sean Zadar caught this black-necked stilt on film at Pickerel Creek WA in Sandusky County on 12 July.

Semipalmated Plover: Tardy northbound migrants persisted till 11 Jun, with one at Caesar Ck SP (**L. Gara**). Returned on schedule, if in small numbers, with the first at BIWA 19 Jul (**J. Lehman**), and a high count of 15 at Conneaut Harbor 26 Jul (**C. Holt**).

Killdeer: Under-appreciated here, killdeers usually impress by sheer numbers. Forty-five gathered in Tuscarawas 19 Jun were a bit early (**E. Schlabach**). At BIWA, **R. Sempier** counted 125+ 4 Jul and 155+ 17 July. **S. Zadar** tallied 132 at PCWA 16 Jul.

Black-necked Stilt: An extraordinary season. Some remarks in the literature indicate this species may have been more common in the nineteenth century, when certainly more habitat existed. Clark (1967), for example, relates his informants averred one or two stilts showed up yearly at GLSM prior to 1900. Lynds Jones reports a specimen from *Cuyahoga* in 1881,

and Dury another from *Hamilton* prior to 1879. Oliver Davie in 1898 wrote it was a rare summer visitor, and speculated that it perhaps bred in the state. Published twentieth-century records exist from 1941 (*Cuyahoga*), 1967 (GLSM), 1981 (Magee), 1985 (*Seneca*), probably one in 1989 (Magee/Ottawa), four in 1995 (KPWA, two in *Lucas, Ashtabula*), and two in 2000 (*Van Wert*). This tendency toward increasing numbers continued in 2004; four were reported this spring (*Preble*, two in *Marion, Erie*), then during the summer reports emerged of a bird at ONWR 5 (**T. Kemp** et al.) and 6 Jun (ONWRC), perhaps the same individual 12 and 27 Jun at CPNWR (**E. Tramer**), then two at BIWA 5 (**R. Shonkwiler**) through 9 Jun (**J. Fry**), then what may have been a single individual on both 12 and 21 Jul (both **S. Zadar**, ph) at Pickerel Ck WA. The BIWA duo, male and female, regularly circled observers, calling loudly, and repeatedly returned singly to the same spot in the marsh, strongly suggesting nesting. Unfortunately, it rained every day from the 9th through the 17th, a total of 4.95 inches as measured in Columbus, probably drowning any nest. Regionally this season, a pair probably nested at Pte Mouillee in Michigan, another nested in Ontario, and a pair was reported in Indiana.

American Avocet: Nineteen reported, eight of them away from Lake Erie. First wave on 14 July, with a flyby at Edgewater Pk in Cleveland (**G. Leidy**), two in Williams (**J. Yochum**), and two at Camp Dennison (**B. Foppe**). Two graced Conneaut 22 Jul (**W. Shaffer**), then on the following day three appeared at Caesar Ck SP (**L. Gara**), one at Greenlawn Dam in Columbus (**M. Hager**) and another at Metzger (**J. Estep**).

Four stopped at Conneaut 27 Jul (Shaffer), where B. Coulter found three 31 Jul.

Greater Yellowlegs: A laggard passed through Pipe Ck WA 1 Jun (D. Sanders), and the returning vanguard showed up in the form of four at Pickerel Ck 12 Jul (S. Zadar).

Lesser Yellowlegs: No Jun reports, with the earliest three coming from 2 Jul at Pipe Ck (J. Lehman). Three in *Gallia* 16 Jul represented a local early record (H. Slack). The high count was 77 at Pickerel Ck 16 Jul (S. Zadar).

Solitary Sandpiper: An apparently healthy one tarried at BIWA through 12 Jun (S&R Harlan). Three returned to *Holmes* by 14 Jul, and the high count was of only eight the following day, at BIWA (D. Sanders).

Willet: None till 22 Jul, with one at Conneaut, and that or another individual there 28 Jul (both W. Shaffer). B. Coulter reported 1-2 there on 31 Jul.

Spotted Sandpiper: The AOU announced a change in its scientific name, which is now *Actitis macularius*. Judging by reports, otherwise a normal year in all respects in Ohio. K. Metcalf noted one perched on a utility wire in *Ashtabula* 27 Jun.

Upland Sandpiper: Evidence of breeding at traditional sites came from Denmark Twp in *Ashtabula* with two 20 Jun (J. Heflich) and two ad and two juv at the Dayton airport 1 Jul (*fide* J. Arnold). Elsewhere, two were seen in *Hardin* 6 Jun (R. Counts), one heard at Bolton Field in Columbus (the first report here in several years) 12 Jun (J. Fry), and a likely migrant at the *Pickaway* airport 16 Jul (D. Overacker).

Whimbrel: Very late or very early? The 19 Jun bird at Metzger was silent on the question (S. Snyder). On a more normal schedule, single birds cruised into Conneaut 24 (D. Sanders) and Cleveland 30 July (G. Leidy).

Ruddy Turnstone: Unusual at Conneaut as late as 12 Jun (J. Pogacnik). Returnees showed up only there, one 28 Jul (W. Shaffer) and two or more 31 Jul (B. Coulter).

Red Knot: Also at Conneaut 31 Jul for B. Coulter was one red knot.

Sanderling: Another tardy migrant at Conneaut 12 Jun was of this species (J. Pogacnik). Nearly all later reports came from the harbor, with as many as 23 there 26 Jul (C. Holt) and 15+ the 31st (B. Coulter).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: Loath to leave were five at BIWA as late as 12 Jun (R&S Harlan). C. Holt witnessed first arrivals at Conneaut 17 Jul, where he later had 55 on the 26th. A locally early report was one in *Gallia* 22 Jul (H. Slack).

Least Sandpiper: One arrived at Pipe Ck as early as 2 Jul (J. Lehman), and as many as 45 were at Pickerel Ck on the 12th (S. Zadar).

White-rumped Sandpiper: Perennially late, one was at Conneaut for J. Pogacnik on 12 June, and one in *Gallia* as late as the 19th was a first local Jun record (H. Slack).

Pectoral Sandpiper: The first apparent returnee showed up in *Mahoning* 30 Jun (B. Jones). Larger numbers included 30 at BIWA 25 Jul (R. Sempier) and 24 in *Williams* the 26th (J. Yochum).

Dunlin: Five stayed in *Williams* through 2 Jun (J. Yochum), and an alternate-plumaged bird 12 Jul at Pickerel Ck (S. Zadar) represented the near-annual probable failed breeder.

Stilt Sandpiper: The only report was of a flock of eight at Conneaut 26 Jul (C. Holt).

Short-billed Dowitcher: Reported in small numbers, beginning with 15 at Ottawa 4 Jul (ONWRC). Two more in *Gallia* 22 Jul represented a first local record for the month (H. Slack). Migrants passed though the period, with a high of only 30, at BIWA 19 Jul (J. Lehman).



Two of three American avocets that spent four hours on the beach at Caesar Creek SP 23 July. Photo by Larry Gara.

Wilson's Snipe: One at Horseshoe Pond in the CVNP 25 Jun was of interest (G. Leidy). In what was probably the vanguard of fall migration, three were detected at ONWR 17 Jul (S. Snyder).

Wilson's Phalarope: Both reports came from ONWR: one 11 Jul from T. Kemp, and two 18 Jul from B. Zwiebel.

Franklin's Gull: The sole report was of a second-year bird at BCSP 9 Jul (D. Overacker).

Little Gull: Extraordinary was a basic-plumaged bird found at Kelleys Isl in mid-summer: 18 Jun (T. Bartlett).

Bonaparte's Gull: Few reports, though repeated sightings of what probably was the same individual at the Findlay reservoirs 8 Jun-29 Jul were of interest (B. Hardesty).

Ring-billed Gull: B. Powell reported numbers at Caesar Ck SP from four to 121 during the period, nearly all in second-summer plumage, molting to ad winter. G. Leidy reported the first juveniles, in Cleveland, 17 Jun.

Herring Gull: Juveniles appeared on the roof of the Cleveland State Convocation Ctr by 5 Jul (R&S Harlan), and others appeared at Conneaut by 26 Jul (C. Holt). Remarkable was news that 3-4 pairs successfully fledged 10 young by 22 Jul in *Gallia*—undoubtedly Ohio's southernmost breeding record (H. Slack).

Great Black-backed Gull: This species apparently does not breed in the Great Lakes, but as many as six were at Conneaut 12 Jun (J. Pogacnik), with two remaining 26 Jul (C. Holt).

Caspian Tern: As late as 12 Jun, one was at Conneaut (J. Pogacnik), and another in Cleveland (G. Leidy). Four at Kelleys Isl on 18 Jun may have been breeders from across the water (T. Bartlett). By 26 Jul, ten including juveniles appeared at Conneaut (C. Holt).

Common Tern: The ONWRC counted 50 on 4 Jul. Seen at Pipe Ck WA on 1 Jun (D. Sanders), 25 were part of the local reintroduction program. Some of them may have been among 55 sighted 30 Jul at the mouth of the Vermilion River, also in *Erie* (S. Zadar).

Forster's Tern: One at Caesar Ck 23 June was unusual (L. Gara), and eight (one in basic plumage) at Metzger on 3 Jul (R. Rogers) were perhaps from Michigan colonies. The high count, of 10, came as these terns began gathering off *Erie* 30 Jul (S. Zadar).

Black Tern: Several dozen reported in the NW during the first ten days of Jun were consistent with reports of nesting at ONWR and CPNWR this year, with one perhaps straying as far as Willard Res in *Huron* 6 Jun (R&S Harlan). E. Tramer relates of the CPNWR birds: "Seven were counted on June 12, and twelve on June 27. They hovered and dropped to the ground repeatedly far out in the center of the marsh; they also carried small fish into the marsh from Lake Erie. Nesting seems highly likely. I also saw four at Metzger on June 23." The ONWRC found one adult with two immatures 4 Jul. By mid-Jul dispersal was underway, witness one at BIWA the 19th (B. Zimmerman), one in Marietta the 22nd (J. Kickefoose), two in *Williams* the 26th (J. Yochum), and two at MWW the 30th (F. Frick). On the 31st the great move came: 14 at Caesar Ck (Gara), 28 at BCSP (D. Overacker), 15-20 in *Union* (R. Lowry), 25+ BIWA (R. Sempier), 10 at Hoover Res (R. Thorn), five in Dayton (R. Neubauer), ~100 at EFSP (D. Morse), eight in *Knox* (D. Plant), and singles in *Wyandot* (R. Counts), at Alum Ck (Thorn), and in *Harrison* (M. Kroeger). Well over two hundred birds in nineteen counties makes Ohio's largest count since 1985.

Short-eared Owl: Nesting was confirmed at The Wilds this season (A. Parker).

Chuck-will's-widow: Birds in *Adams* vocalized through 9 Jul, a fairly late date (D. Sanders).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Under-reported in the northeast. At Holden Arboretum L. Rosche saw one carrying food 10 Jun, where H. Petruschke saw one calling 18 Jun. K. Metcalf had two in separate *Ashtabula* locations 27 Jun.

Pileated Woodpecker: Of this species in the northwest, E. Tramer remarked: "At least one bird wandered about Oak Openings MP during June and was last heard July 14; no evidence of nesting was found. Pileateds have not nested in Lucas County for a very long time, but the spate of recent records raises the hope that a nest will be found soon."

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Latest migrant 7 Jun in *Athens* (**B. Placier**). No evidence of breeding was associated with one calling at Hogback Ridge in *Ashtabula* 30 Jun and 4 Jul (**J. Pogacnik**).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: A northbound migrant was around as late as 5 Jun (**Trumbull, K. Metcalf**). **T. Bartlett** reported one southbound banded in *Seneca* 31 Jul.

Alder Flycatcher: High count ~8 territorial males in and Mosquito WA and GRWA 9 Jun (**K. Metcalf**); he also noted a nest with three eggs at GRWA 23-25 Jun. Late migrants were involved in males singing in Cleveland 3 Jun (**G. Leidy**) and at KPWA on 5 Jun (**R. Sempier**), but migrants that cut short their journeys may explain singing males at BCSP 12 Jun and 17 Jul (**D. Overacker**), at McCracken Fen in *Logan* 17 Jun and Cedar Bog in *Champaign* 25 Jun (both **T. Shively**), and one way down in *Butler* on 26 Jun (**N. Cade**).



Nest of alder flycatcher, photographed 23 Jun by K. Metcalf at Grand River WA in Trumbull Co. The eggs are white, with brownish markings. Possibly first photo of Ohio nest of this species.

Least Flycatcher: At Clear Ck MP in *Hocking* **J. Watts** found a male on 2 Jun singing in the woods that later relocated to an open field, where he was still singing 19 June (**M. Busam**).

Loggerhead Shrike: One found in *Logan* 9 and 26 July was only three+ mi from a record of a few years ago. One or more shrikes returned to the nest site of last year in *Adams*, but breeding was not confirmed.

Bell's Vireo: Probably spring's bird was seen again in *Logan* 25 Jun (**T. Shively**), and two adults were seen feeding a cowbird hatchling at spring's BCSP site 12 Jun (**J. Fry**). New to the scene, however, were a singing male in *Columbus* 20 June (**R. Thorn**), and a pair at Stage's Pond SNP in *Pickaway* 16 Jul (**D. Overacker**).

Blue-headed Vireo: Two males were observed at Hinckley MP in *Medina* 19 Jun (**R&S Harlan**). The Akron Aud Soc count of *Summit* 11-20 Jun found 13 (*vide* **A. Chasar**). Two were in the CVNP 11 Jul (**D. Chasar**). One sang near Mallard Lk at Oak Openings MP through the period (**E. Tramer**).

Tree Swallow: **H. Slack** reported breeders are expanding in *Gallia* and *Lawrence*, with second nestings likely.

Bank Swallow: Staging began by 6 Jul, when 100+ were at a favorite spot in *Conneaut* (**C. Holt**). On 25 Jul, 800+ at Funk WA represented a local high count (**S. Snyder**).

Cliff Swallow: A hundred fifty colonized the fish gate at Metzger Marsh MA this year (ONWRC). **K. Metcalf** noted a roost of 80-90 in an abandoned *Geauga* building 15 Jul.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Nested east of Toledo (*vide* **G. Links**), and two were seen in Hinckley MP 13 Jun, then one 19 Jun (**S&R Harlan**). One at a *Van Wert* feeder 31 Jul (**J. Perchalski**) had already hit the road. **G. Leidy** detected several in two spots in the CVNP during the period.

Brown Creeper: Two nesting pairs were located at Hoover Res 1 Jun (**C. Bombaci, J. Kuenzli**). A pair in breeding condition captured 6 May at the Turtle Ck unit of Magee remained 21 Jul (**P. Rodewald**). Three were detected at Holden Arboretum 18 Jun (**H. Petruschke**). A bird was at the Ledges in the CVNP 11 Jul (**D. Chasar**).

Winter Wren: **H. Petruschke** estimated eight or more at Stebbins Gulch in *Geauga* 3 Jul.

Sedge Wren: All reports follow. Three at Pickerington Ponds 7 Jun (**J. Watts**) persisted through the eop (m obs). Two were found in SW *Summit* by the Akron Aud Soc team 11-20 Jun (*vide* **A. Chasar**). One singing in *Columbus* 18 Jun (**R. Thorn**) was present 27 Jul (**B. Powell**). **N. Lowe** discovered three at Funk WA 26 Jun, which remained through the eop. **R. Counts** found two in *Wyandot* 26 Jun, then three more

there 7 Jul. The ONWRC found three 4 Jul. **M. Busam** had one at Gilmore Ponds 8 Jul. **E. Schlabach** reported one singing in *Tuscarawas* 10 Jul, **E. Tramer** two singing in a *Williams* field 15 Jul, and **Counts** seven in *Hardin* 16 Jul. **H&S Hiris** found four at Magee 18 Jul, and **N. Cade** heard "several" at MWW 25 Jul.

Marsh Wren: One, a local first, attested to the overall health of the new Thomas Wetlands in *Paulding* 20 Jun (**M&D Dunakin**). Ten singing males did likewise for an older marsh at Killbuck WA along a single road 25 Jul (**S. Snyder**). High count 33, by the ONWRC 4 Jul.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: A lone male was at Hinckley MP 19 Jun (**R&S Harlan**).

Eastern Bluebird: Of this species in *Lucas*, **E. Tramer** remarks: "A major success story here. Now common in rural areas west of Toledo. Large flocks roam about Oak Openings MP after the nesting season."

Veery: One sang in *Gahanna, Franklin*, 1 Jun (**R. Thorn**), and another in the Oak Openings 16 Jun (**B. Powell**). A traditional southern nesting area, Clear Ck MP, had six or seven singing males 4 Jun (**J. Watts**). **D. Overacker** saw and heard a male in *Champaign* 9 Jul. **T. Leslie** et al. detected seven in Crall Wds in NW *Ashland* 27 Jun.

Swainson's Thrush: **E. Tramer** reported a straggler 3 Jun in *Lucas*.

Hermit Thrush: **D. Chasar** observed a nest with two ad and three young at the Ledges in the CVNP 11 and 15 Jul.

Brown Thrasher: **Tramer** reports that thrashers are struggling in his region, now outnumbered by northern mockingbirds in the area surrounding the Oak Openings.

Cedar Waxwing: On 2 Jul **S. Conrad** estimated 1000+ at Delaware Lk hawking for mayflies.

Blue-winged Warbler: The Akron Audubon Society count took the prize again with 103 found in *Summit* 11-20 Jun (*vide* **A. Chasar**). **S. Zadar** found a color-banded blue-winged at Horseshoe Pond in the CVNP that proved to be at least ten years old, surpassing the previous record of seven years for this species.

Golden-winged Warbler: **S. Zadar** observed a male on 1 Jul feeding a fledgling in the CVNP (*Summit*) where he had previously observed a male on 15 Jun. It was likely mated with a female blue-winged warbler, seen feeding the fledglings the same day. See **Zadar's** notes in this issue.

"Brewster's Warbler": **R. Nirschl** found one, singing the blue-winged's song, in the Oak Openings 3 Jun, later relocated 27 Jun by **B. Zwiebel**.

"Lawrence's Warbler": **L. Rosche** had one near Ravenna 4 Jun. **R&S Harlan** reported a hybrid, probably of this variety, from the CVNP 17 Jun.

Northern Parula: Cedar Bog, midst the corn & beans of *Champaign*, is a refugium for parulas: **T. Shively** reported four males there 25 Jun. The **Dunakins** had a new summer record for the species in *Paulding* with a male 1 Jul. And **R. Nirschl** found another in the Toledo area 13 Jun; for the rest of the story, see his article in this issue.

Yellow Warbler: **R&S Harlan** reported local birds stopped singing the first week of Jul; by the 17th, nocturnal migrants were noted; **E. Schlabach** had noted the first migrant the previous day in *Holmes*. Their migration can be protracted: three weeks later, the editor saw yellow warblers in northern Nova Scotia.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: Within expected limits were pairs in *Erie* 8 Jun (**J. Bednarik**) and 12 Jun (**B. Phillips**), seven males in *Geauga* 9 Jun (**K. Metcalf**), one in the Oak Openings 9 Jun (**M. Anderson**)



Not really in prime habitat, but heard by visitors to Conneaut Harbor during the summer was this marsh wren. Photo by Gary Meszaros.

through 23 Jun (**R. Nirschl**), as well as four at Kelleys Isl 18 Jun (**T. Bartlett**). More unusual was a territorial pair at Clear Ck MP in *Hocking* 4 Jun (**J. Watts**), and a singing male in *Hamilton* 25 Jun (**N. Cade**).

Magnolia Warbler: **R&S Harlan** took note of four males at Hinckley MP in *Medina* 13 Jun. **H. Petruschke** reported one 18 Jun at Holden Arboretum.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: A late passerby sang in Cleveland 3 Jun (**G. Leidy**).

Yellow-rumped Warbler: Two notably late individuals were reported, one at Edgewater Pk in Cleveland 17 Jun (**G. Leidy**), and another well described in *Ross* on 24 Jun (**K. Sieg**).

Black-throated Green Warbler: Novel for the NW was a singing male at Oak Openings MP in *Lucas* 18 Jun (**G. Links**).

Blackburnian Warbler: A male, at a site different from that reported in spring, was in Hinckley MP in *Medina* 13 Jun (**R&S Harlan**), and a singing male was found by **M. Anderson** at the Oak Openings the following day.

Yellow-throated Warbler: In Ohio the subspecies *D. d. albiflora* is often called the “sycamore warbler” because of a marked preference for this tree and its riparian settings for nesting here. In recent years southern Ohio breeders have been found in drier spots, and among pines. For example, **F. Renfrow** reported probable nesters undeserving of the moniker in *Hamilton*: five singing males at Winton Woods campground 23 Jun, six at Mitchell Memorial Forest 30 Jun, four at Spring Grove Cemetery 9 Jul, and another at Walnut Hills Cemetery 1 Jul (breeding confirmed)—all in pines, with white pine seemingly preferred. **Renfrow** reports finding pine-nesting yellow-throats in the area since 1998, perhaps—as with pine warblers and even our famous brown-headed nuthatch—driven north by die-offs of pines following spreading pine beetle infestations. Elsewhere, a male in *Huron* 6 Jun was out of normal range (**R&S Harlan**).

Pine Warbler: **F. Renfrow** also kept track of this conifer-loving species in *Hamilton*: one 16 Jun at Rowe Arboretum, a pair 20 Jun at Indian Hill, a juv 23 Jun at Winton Wds, and two ad and four juv at Winton Wds 9 Jul. At least one territorial male was in *Cuyahoga* at N. Chagrin MP through the season (**K. Metcalf**).

Blackpoll Warbler: Late was one on 11 Jun at Bratenahl, *Cuyahoga* (**L. Rosche**).

Cerulean Warbler: Of interest was one heard at Cedar Bog in *Champaign* 25 Jun by **T. Shively**. Another sang as late as 12 July in *Geauga* (**K. Metcalf**). See **R. Nirschl**'s article on a possible hybrid with a northern parula in this issue.

Black-and-white Warbler: **G. Meszaros** discovered a nest in Hell Hollow, *Lake* during the summer.

American Redstart: **G. Leidy** noted late birds in Cleveland, four on 3 Jun, then one on 17 Jun.

Prothonotary Warbler: Near Hoover Res in *Delaware*, **C. Bombaci** found 21 males singing 1 Jun, with 50 territories noted by 10 Jun. See article in this issue.

Worm-eating Warbler: The AOU announced a change in the scientific name of this species, to *Helmitheros vermivorum*.

Ovenbird: A migrant was still hurrying through Cleveland 3 Jun (**G. Leidy**).

Northern Waterthrush: **T. Bartlett** reported one banded in *Seneca* 30 Jul.

Kentucky Warbler: Five males at Clear Ck MP in *Hocking* were fewer than normal (**J. Watts**).

Connecticut Warbler: One tarried at HBSP 6 Jun (**L. Rosche**).

Mourning Warbler: **R. Thorn** observed a late migrant 1 June in Gahanna, but one singing 18 Jun in the Oak Openings (**G. Links**), two reported for the Akron Aud Soc count in *Summit* 11-20 Jun (*vide* **A. Chasar**), and another at the North Kingsville Sand Barrens in *Ashtabula* 26 Jun (**L. Rosche**) were long delayed.

Yellow-breasted Chat: **G. Meszaros** reported six territories at GRWA this summer.

Summer Tanager: This species seems to be spreading north. The Oak Openings of Toledo, always

inviting to birds of a southern disposition, has consistently hosted many in recent years, including a count of nine along only two roads on 18 Jun (**G. Links**).

Vesper Sparrow: **R&S Harlan** found a respectable five during a BBS count in *Huron* on 6 Jun.

Lark Sparrow: The maximum number reported for the traditional Oak Openings breeding area was eight on 16 Jun (**S. Snyder**). Elsewhere, one was singing in *Williams* 28 Jun (**J. Pogacnik**), another was in *Ashland* 29 Jun-1 Jul (**D. Spreng, T. Leslie**), and yet another at MWW 3 Jul (**P. Wharton**).

Grasshopper Sparrow: Versus a century ago there, “hundreds” were reported from Crown City WA (*Gallia/Lawrence*) on 17 Jun (**H. Slack**). **G. Meszaros** had 20 singing males west of Strasburg in *Tuscarawas* 3 Jul, and the ONWRC 14 the next day.

Henslow's Sparrow: Widespread in the accustomed locales, including NW *Williams*, where numerous in hayfields 20 Jun and 15 Jul (**E. Tramer**). One was singing in Greenfield Twp in *Huron* 6 Jun (**R&S Harlan**). The VOA property in *Butler* boasted 10+ on 3 Jul (**M. Busam**), and 20+ were calling in a field in *Wyandot* 24 Jul (**R. Counts**). Well worth mention are two found at the Bath Nat Pres in *Summit* 6 Jun (**A&A Webb**).

White-throated Sparrow: **M. Boyd** banded one on 26 Jul in *Athens*; it showed a cloacal protuberance indicative of a breeding state.

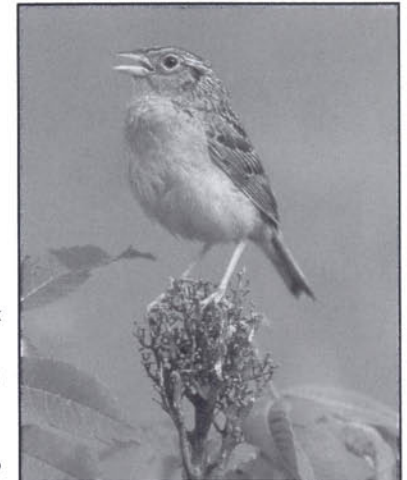
White-crowned Sparrow: **T. Kemp** reported one at the tip of the Marblehead peninsula 2-4 Jul. The previous species, though casual, is likelier in summer, and even has breeding records from this very spot, but a white-crowned in July is a remarkable occurrence here.

Dark-eyed Junco: **R&S Harlan**'s first *Medina* summer record hung around 29 May through at least 19 Jun at Hinckley MP. **L. Rosche** found a few at Holden Arboretum 19 Jun. One was at Brecksville Resn 22 Jun (**D. Chasar**). **D. Plant** reported one at a favored Mohican SF location 4 Jul. **G. Meszaros** found four nests in Hell Hollow, *Lake* 9 Jul.



The Lake County parks host dozens of pairs of dark-eyed juncos, and this proud male guarded a territory at the Hell Hollow Wilderness Area 9 July. *Photo by Gary Meszaros.*

apparently took place at Glacier Ridge MP in *Union*, as **R. Lowry** found an adult male 19 Jul, and **J. McCormac** two juv there 31 Jul.



One of twenty singing west of Strasburg in *Tuscarawas* Co. on 3 July was this male grasshopper sparrow. *Photo by Gary Meszaros.*

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: A female way down in *Clermont* 29 Jun was of interest (**F. Kidd**).

Blue Grosbeak: We had good numbers in spring, and again in summer. The *Pickaway* birds fledged at least one, remaining through the eop (m obs). M obs also found one in Dayton from 11 Jun on (*vide* **J. Arnold**). Birds in the Oak Openings astonishingly numbered at least seven by 15 Jun (**R. Nirschl vide G. Links**). **E. Schlabach** reported a singing first-summer bird in *Tuscarawas* 26 Jun. Beyond the usual numbers in *Adams*, **B. Foppe** heard two singing in *Clermont* 15 Jul, **D. Morse** another in *Brown* 16 Jul, and **D. Hess** three in *Ross* the last week of Jul. Finally, breeding

Dickcissel: A fairly good year, widespread though numbers were never large; many nests were destroyed by early July haying. High counts were 10-12 near the Pickaway airport 16 Jul (**R. Rogers**) and 11 by the 4 Jul ONWRC. Appeared widely across western glaciated counties; those specifically reported included *Adams, Butler, Clark, Champaign, Clinton, Coshocton, Darke, Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Gallia, Hancock, Hardin, Greene, Lawrence, Licking, Logan, Lorain, Lucas, Madison, Marion, Montgomery, Ottawa, Paulding, Pickaway, Ross, Seneca, Union, Van Wert, Warren, Wayne, Williams, Wood, and Wyandot.*



Just one of fifty bobolinks at Morgan Swamp Preserve in Ashtabula Co., this male sat for a portrait by Gary Meszaros.

Bobolink: These charming birds also often fall victim to early haying. **A. Parker** reported record numbers at The Wilds this year. Appreciable numbers elsewhere included 50 at Morgan Swamp Preserve in *Ashtabula* 28 Jun (**G. Meszaros**), 50+ at the VOA site in *Butler* 3 Jul (**M. Busam**), 40 at Bath Nature Preserve 10 Jul (**M&T Romito**), and 80+ in molt in *Hardin* 16 Jul (**R. Counts**).

Eastern Meadowlark: Seemed to be in normal (i.e. alarmingly low) numbers. The VOA site in *Butler* had 30+ this year (**M. Busam**).

Western Meadowlark: A great find for the northeast was a singing male found by **D. Vogus** in *SW Summit* 18 Jun, last reported 29 Jun (**T&B Sponseller**). The bird in *Wood* from the previous period persisted through 9 Jun (**G. Miller**).

Yellow-headed Blackbird: A few, including some carrying food, were seen in off-limits areas of ONWR during the season (m obs), with many reports from auto tours. Small numbers of these birds have been mostly irregular nesters in cattails in the NW marshes for decades, and are more often detected among fall blackbird flocks.

Orchard Oriole: **R&S Harlan** remark that this species continues to show up more and more often in the northern counties; during their BBS route in *Huron* this summer, they found nine orchards vs. only five Baltimores. The Akron Aud Soc count in *Summit* found a record 34 during the period 11-20 Jun (*fide* **A. Chasar**). **D. Chasar** reported six seen at three separate CVNP locations during Jun.

Purple Finch: After a very good spring, it was still not a given that we would have a very good breeding season, but many reporters called them common, and **L. Rosche** pronounced them "widespread in northeastern Ohio" this season.

Pine Siskin: No breeding confirmed, but a few came to feeders: two in *Findlay* 1 Jun (*fide* **B. Hardesty**), two at *LSR* 7 Jun (**J. Pogacnik**), five 7&8 Jun in *Logan* (**T. Shively**), and one 3 Jul in *Maumee* (**B. Jacksy**, ph).

Contributors:

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Further Afield

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HARLAN

"Win if you can, lose if you must, but always cheat."

Jesse "The Body" Ventura

Before he swapped his sobriquet "The Body" for the more parliamentary and dignified "The Mind," and transmogrified himself into the more politically correct and upstanding character of Governor of Minnesota, professional wrestler Jesse Ventura was known for his ostentatious, colorful, and rather unconventional entertainment skills in the wrestling ring. Don't ask me how I know these things—I just do. Anyway, after a lengthy career, health issues forced Jesse out of the ring and over to ringside, where he was able to hone his communication skills as a wrestling commentator. In this role he quickly coined a handful of catch-phrases that served him well; the above quote, which happens to be a personal favorite of mine, is also perhaps his best known expression. Another favorite, but used sparingly, and only when he witnessed a particularly notable in-ring maneuver, was "I'm impressed, and I don't impress easy." Politely overlooking any unfortunate grammar, I think Jesse and I share this trait, and possibly only this trait—we don't impress easy.

Via this admittedly convoluted and blatantly Rube Goldberg-esque segue, we manage again to arrive on the Ohio birding scene, where there is one, and exactly one, Ohio bird book that never fails to impress me every time I consult it. It is the marvelous and astonishing *The Birds of Buckeye Lake, Ohio* by Milton B. Trautman, published back in 1940 as Univ. Mich. Mus. Misc. Publ. No. 44, by the University of Michigan Press. In fact, it might still be available through the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology; you may want to email them to check availability at fpaper@umich.edu, or call them at (734) 764-0470. If the Museum has run out, the book also appears every now and then on the sales lists of used book dealers. At 466 pages, it is unquestionably one of the finest regional bird treatments I have ever seen. It's really good; you should get one.

Even though Trautman may perhaps be best known as an ichthyologist (his 1957 *The Fishes of Ohio* is another classic), his official investigation of the birds of the Buckeye Lake area commenced on 1 Feb 1922 and lasted until 1 Feb 1934, a period of 12 years. *The Birds* also includes copious earlier details Trautman gleaned from interviews with former residents, market hunters, and sportsmen. Likewise, many significant sightings are also included from 1934 up to the date of publication in 1940. The area covered in the book centers on Buckeye Lake, which lies about 30 miles east of Columbus and includes portions of Licking, Fairfield, and Perry counties. The area is roughly rectangular in shape, and stretches for about 10 miles from west to east, and about five miles from north to south. In total, the area covered

contains nearly 44 square miles of birding territory: a good-sized chunk, but not too big.

So many aspects of the area's birdlife and landscape have changed over the years--- this fact alone makes the book of worthy of serious consideration---but it is truly the painstaking attention to detail that never ceases to amaze me. Trautman himself seems to have been a complex series of incongruities— a specialist and a generalist; an old fashioned, assiduous scientist melded with a broadly interested naturalist; a stern conservationist but an avid hunter; and a cold-hearted and disciplined collector of living things, but a romantic appreciator of everything.

Trautman studied birds in all habitats, in all weather conditions, and at all times of day and night. He kept track of numbers, migrations, and trends, of behaviors, and of nestings. He kept tabs on the food preferences of many species, often with maniacal attention to detail. While his skills of observation are readily apparent, I am also constantly impressed with his *patience* in making these observations-- an area where I am personally woefully inadequate. I know I could never hope to duplicate many of his efforts, let alone approach his accomplishments. And I doubt many of us could.

But rather than simply review a 65 year-old book, I would like to offer a taste of the work in Trautman's own words. I will provide 25 short quotations from the text, but I won't name the species to which they refer. Instead, I'll offer three options; you'll have to determine the correct species through your own knowledge of behavior, timing, abundance, and distribution. Some options are straightforward, others may require a bit of thought or puzzlement, while others are just stupid. The answers will appear at the end of the quiz. All readers who answer 20-25 questions correctly get to keep all the birds on their life lists; those who score below 20 must give away at least three species to less fortunate birders, preferably me. Let's begin with number one:

1. "This dainty little bird was not a habitual fish eater . . . During hazy, quiet Indian summer afternoons little groups of ??? could be seen swimming rapidly in one direction and then another, picking up spiders which had floated over the lake on their gossamer threads and dropped upon the water . . . At such times the females occasionally stopped feeding to give diminutive little quacks, which seemed surprisingly loud in the stillness of the fall afternoons and early evenings."

A. Bufflehead B. Green-winged teal C. Common moorhen

2. "The ??? was unquestionably the most abundant nesting species of the heron tribe. June censuses indicated that between 40 and 90 pairs nested yearly . . . The species was essentially a cattail marsh-nesting bird."

A. Least bittern B. Great blue heron C. Green heron

3. "At least a few ??? were seen every winter . . . Sometimes during sleet storms the tails of the birds froze to perches . . . and when they flew away they literally left their tails behind them . . . During a sleet storm on January 25, 1930, I saw a flock of 11 ??? upon the top rail of a board fence. They flushed at my approach . . . It was a

curious sight to see the birds extricate themselves . . . and still more curious to see the 11 tails frozen to the fence.”

A. Mourning dove B. Common grackle C. Brown creeper

4. “An unusual migration was noted on the early morning of September 1, 1931. While rowing a boat . . . a distance of about 3 miles, I noted 32 ??? at various intervals along the route. All were flying southward across the lake. The large numbers of individuals that evidently were migrating that morning can only be realized when one remembers that so small a bird can be seen only a short distance and that this flight extended over a 3-mile front for a period of more than 2 hours.”

A. Brown creeper B. Ruby-throated hummingbird C. Golden-crowned kinglet

5. “A survey made on Onion Island, June 9, 1928, revealed 35 nests, of which 5 contained eggs or young, and the remainder were empty ‘cock nests.’ These nests were of the customary globular type, and all except 4 had their openings in the general direction of south or west . . . Since 1928 the openings of 208 nests were observed, and in 161 the openings were south or west.”

A. Baltimore oriole B. Sedge wren C. Marsh wren

6. “In 1922 no ??? were recorded in the area. In 1929, 8000 were noted in a day. This is the most remarkable change in the status of any bird during the 12-year investigation, and rivals in many respects the spectacular change in the status of Passenger Pigeons in the last century . . . After the close of the investigation in 1934 and until 1936 this species increased in numbers at an astonishing rate, especially during migrations.” [On 10 November 1935, one roost contained an estimated 132,300 birds.]

A. Brown-headed cowbird B. House sparrow C. European starling

7. “The stomach of a bird collected . . . November 11, 1933, was filled with approximately 1200 lesser duckweed plants (*Lemna minor*), 8 greater duckweed plants (*Spirodela polyrhiza*), 121 seeds of the dotted smartweed (*Persicaria punctata*), 9 seeds of another species of smartweed (*Persicaria* sp.), 3 seeds of hornwort (*Ceratophyllum demersum*), 1 small piece of the carapace of a crayfish, and a few grams of gravel.”

A. Northern shoveler B. Common goldeneye C. Hooded merganser

8. “At the time of this study, the beloved ‘pa’tridge’ had become only a fond memory in the minds of older men, and the species and name meant nothing to the younger generation of sportsmen.”

A. Ruffed grouse B. Greater prairie-chicken C. Gray partridge

9. “On August 9 [1930] an incomplete census showed 77 ??? . . . Unlike other herons, this species did not consume large quantities of fish . . . The stomach of a bird collected August 7, 1930, contained 1 small leopard frog, remains of 4 to 6 caddis fly larvae (Trichoptera), traces of at least 5 water striders (Gerridae), 2 marsh treaders (Hydrometra), remains of both damselfly and dragonfly larvae (Odonata), 2 fly larvae

(Diptera), and traces of 2 aquatic beetles (*Hydrophilus*). Besides the food there were 3 quartz pebbles which average 3 mm. in diameter.”

A. Cattle egret B. Little blue heron C. Yellow-crowned night-heron

10. “[B]y March 10 almost all of the pairs were in their nesting territories. At this season the male was particularly bold and conspicuous . . . announcing by his wild, free scream that he had established nesting territory. The habit . . . was often his undoing, especially during the latter years of the investigation when the so-called ‘vermin campaigns’ had become popular, and the ‘chicken hawk’ was considered a great prize.”

A. Red-shouldered hawk B. Broad-winged hawk C. Chimney swift

11. “Censuses indicated that there were more than 50 pairs nesting annually between 1922 and 1930 . . . Nineteen nests with completed sets of eggs were observed. Cattail marshes, buttonbush swamps, wet prairies containing coarse grasses, sedges, and bulrushes, edges of marshy pools in swamp forests, and wild rose and blackberry tangles in swampy meadows provided some of the rather diverse habitats in which the nests were situated.”

A. Red-winged blackbird B. Common yellowthroat C. King rail

12. “Until 1900 the ??? was considered a game bird and was often used in the making of potpies.”

A. Northern flicker B. Red-winged blackbird C. Black vulture

13. “From the shelter of a duck blind during a violent rainstorm on November 7, 1925, I noticed an unusual gull. To attract the bird I strewed pieces of a partly decomposed channel catfish . . . This appears to be the only record of the capture of this species in Ohio . . . It is interesting to note that for 5 days previous to the capture of this bird, strong northeasterly gales had been sweeping the North Atlantic off the coast of Newfoundland, and traveling southwestward across the country.”

A. California gull B. Mew gull C. Black-legged kittiwake

14. “Because of the abundance of the bird it was impossible to obtain an accurate estimate of the hundreds of annual nesting pairs. Some conception of abundance was obtained from a nesting census which totaled 218 singing males . . . on June 12, 1928, along 1 mile of lake shore . . . The slowly drawled ‘sweet-cheeuu’ note of this species was one of the most familiar bird songs of the lowlands.”

A. Acadian flycatcher B. Alder flycatcher C. Willow flycatcher

15. “During the greatest fall concentrations, between September 18 and October 25, the species was more numerous than at any other season, 50 to 500 individuals were daily noted, and occasionally thousands were present . . . The fall transients were found principally in the more sparsely vegetated or close-cropped fields, in short-grass meadows, and in pastures.”

A. Vesper sparrow B. Horned lark C. Lapland longspur

16. "The ??? was not recorded between 1922 and 1925, but from 1926 to 1934 it was regularly a rare transient and summer resident. More birds were seen between 1930 and 1933 than between 1926 and 1929. This evidence suggests that the species invaded the area during the investigation and that it has been increasing in numbers. This was not true. During the first 4 years of the survey, I was almost entirely unacquainted with this secretive sparrow, its habitat, and song, and I overlooked it entirely."

A. Lark sparrow B. Le Conte's sparrow C. Henslow's sparrow

17. "The ??? was among the first . . . species to begin its southward migration. The easily recognized flight notes were heard at night and in early morning, as early as June 18-19 (1932). By early July they could be heard almost nightly . . . and in the first half of August the height of the southward movement was attained . . . Only an occasional straggler was noted after September 10."

A. Yellow warbler B. Lesser yellowlegs C. Yellow-rumped warbler

18. "The ??? was recorded capturing, carrying, or eating food upon 41 occasions, and with 1 exception the food consisted of a mouse, shrew, frog, snake, or crayfish. Once, on June 16, 1928, an adult Meadowlark was taken . . . As the male came over the nest he dropped the lark, and at the same instant the female rose vertically from the nest into the air for about 10 feet, turned on her back, and caught the falling bird in her talons . . . The time taken to eat the lark was 3 minutes and 10 seconds..."

A. Cooper's hawk B. Northern harrier C. American kestrel

19. "Southbound transients began to invade the area during the first half of September, and the peak of the fall migration was throughout the latter half of that month and the first week of October . . . It was difficult to determine the fall abundance because of the density of marsh vegetation and the quiet, secretive habits of the bird at that season . . . When the marshes were persistently worked, between 25 and 37 birds were seen. On some fall days there must have been 100 to 200 ??? present."

A. Pied-billed grebe B. Sora C. American bittern

20. "The following characters were used to identify this species in autumn plumage in the field: It habitually fed in deeper water . . . and more frequently immersed the entire head. The flight note was coarser than any notes of the Semipalmated Sandpiper . . . The dusky legs of the ??? had a greenish cast in certain lights, instead of always being black as were those of the Semipalmated Sandpiper or the yellowish green . . . of the Least Sandpiper . . . There was usually some chestnut-red on the feathers of the back, shoulders, wings, and tertials . . . The bill of the ??? appears heavy at the base and is slightly curved downward at the tip."

A. Dunlin B. Baird's sandpiper C. Western sandpiper

21. "The first ??? recorded in each northward migration during the investigation was seen between March 25 and April 5 . . . Migration was at its height during the last 3 weeks of April, and then as many as 15 birds were noted in a day. In spring

all except a few were found about osage-orange hedges, and the remainder were in hawthorn-dotted pastures and thickets."

A. American woodcock B. Loggerhead shrike C. Bewick's wren

22. "During the earlier years of the survey I had difficulty in finding fall birds. In 1927 I discovered that they readily responded to the 'Screech Owl' whistle . . . In order to obtain a response from the birds it was necessary to remain quiet for a few moments beside a brush tangle or weedy field where there was a flock of . . . sparrows, and then whistle. After a brief silence, there would be a murmur among the flock . . . When I whistled a few times more, one after another of this species left their retreat, flew upward, and perched prominently . . . with the feathers of the crest elevated to the utmost . . . On a few occasions after whistling I have counted as many as 42."

A. Lincoln's sparrow B. White-throated sparrow C. Grasshopper sparrow

23. "These birds were most secretive, and since they were present in late spring when the brushy tangles were completely foliated, they were usually extremely difficult to observe. Between 7:00 and 8:30 A.M., however, some males left the dense tangles to perch and sing from small trees or bushes . . . persistently in a loud clear voice for several minutes at a time . . . The males usually sang a single type of song, which I interpreted as 'chip-a-dilly, chip-a-dilly, chip-a-dilly, quoit.'"

A. Mourning warbler B. Connecticut warbler C. Belted kingfisher

24. "From a blind, on the afternoon of October 31, 1925, I noted a peculiar performance by 2 ???. When first seen, these whitish birds were feeding upon a dark mud flat on which they were very conspicuous. While they were busily engaged in feeding, a large Cooper's Hawk flew overhead. Upon seeing the hawk, the ??? ran quickly into a small patch of snow near by . . . and stood there motionless for several minutes . . . That the birds actually ran into the snow . . . in order to be less conspicuous, is difficult to believe."

A. Piping plover B. Sanderling C. American white pelican

25. "The peak of migration occurred in August, when a few birds could be nightly heard; during the larger flights dozens and occasionally hundreds were heard passing overhead in a southerly direction . . . The 'puttie-putt-putt' notes of the southbound transients during warm summer nights and early, misty mornings were as appealing and pleasant as the prolonged whistle of the spring birds."

A. Eastern meadowlark B. Swainson's thrush C. Upland sandpiper

Answers: 1 B; 2 A; 3 A; 4 B; 5 C; 6 C; 7 A; 8 A; 9 B; 10 A; 11 C; 12 A; 13 C; 14 C; 15 A; 16 C; 17 A; 18 B; 19 C; 20 C; 21 B; 22 A; 23 B; 24 B; 25 C.

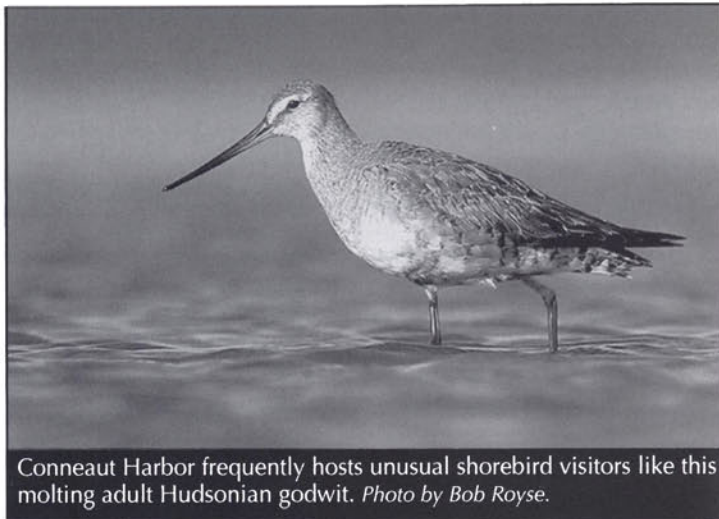
I trust you found a few eye-openers in there somewhere. Buy the book; believe me, you'll find many more. And speaking of books, a new work by Milt Trautman is (posthumously) in the works, being prepared by R.L. Stuckey for publication. Tentatively entitled *The Birds of Western Lake Erie*, I expect it will be well worth the wait. 🦋

The Outer Limits: Fourteen Years of Conneaut Birding Trips

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It all started simply enough. While talking with my dad one September day I heard him mention difficulty launching his pleasure boat. He said the water was very low at Ashtabula, so he had gone to Conneaut, but the water was too low there, too.



Conneaut Harbor frequently hosts unusual shorebird visitors like this molting adult Hudsonian godwit. *Photo by Bob Royse.*



This semipalmated sandpiper is typical of some of the in-your-face views of shorebirds available at Conneaut. *Photo by Lana Hays.*

I had made many visits to Walnut Beach in Ashtabula, though it was a site of declining value for shorebirds. But Conneaut Harbor, fourteen miles still farther east and almost to the Pennsylvania border? I'd never been there.

I pulled into the "Planet Conneaut" on 15 September 1991, and said, "Eureka!"

A large bar of mud and sand enclosed a lagoon. It was un-vegetated then. A marbled godwit was an exciting find, as were black-bellied and American golden-plovers. The next week brought western and Baird's sandpipers.

On my third visit came nirvana. I drove up within feet of a molting adult Hudsonian godwit as it picked at washed-up plant material. Eventually it flew off, giving a low call. I began

making regular visits to Conneaut after that, collecting a lot of data as well as some funny moments. Below I offer an occurrence graph derived from these data.

Other species reliably reported by others during this fourteen-year period include piping plover, Wilson's phalarope, and red-necked phalarope.

My favorite birding moments include the

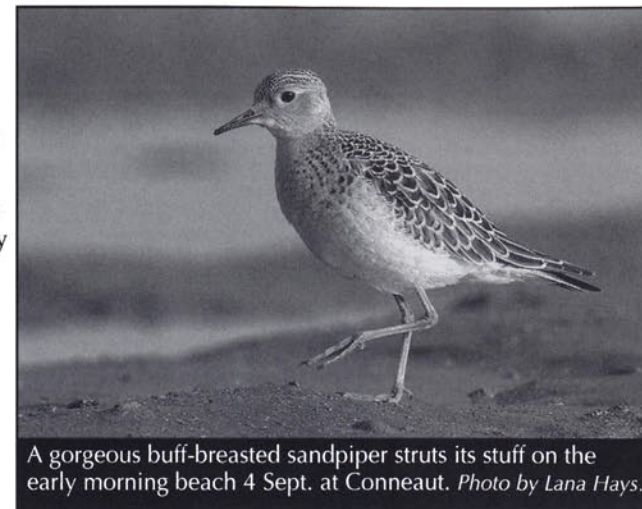
sound and sight of a peregrine stooping on a juvenal Hudsonian godwit, a black-necked stilt foraging in snow flurries, 43 American golden-plovers arriving in one fell swoop, American avocets and willets, whimbrels and red knots, and 28 striking adult ruddy turnstones—in fall! Buff-breasted sandpipers from the west have put on yearly cameos here in easternmost Ohio. Long-distance purple sandpipers,



Semipalmated plovers, like this 6 Sept. individual, are regular spring and fall up-close visitors. *Photo by Lana Hays.*

point-blank white-rumps and stilt sandpipers... Conneaut is truly a shorebird migrant trap. At Conneaut Harbor, human disturbances can vary from nil to "time to pull out," and strange human-style things can happen. One year on 1 November I thought I saw a body along the shore. As I walked up to boot it, I saw it was a Halloween dummy! Only then did the local police come flying over to check it out. I'm sure the authorities have had to come out to the sand-flats many times. Once I saw three pick-up trucks chained together trying to get unstuck. Among humans as well as birds, it seems anything can happen at Conneaut.

In my next account, I'll take on the non-shorebird highlights of the past 14 years. In the chart that follows, open circles represent a single record, a crossed circle 2-3 records, and a solid circle 4+ records. ▲



A gorgeous buff-breasted sandpiper struts its stuff on the early morning beach 4 Sept. at Conneaut. *Photo by Lana Hays.*

SEASONAL OCCURRENCE OF

SPECIES	JAN			FEB			MAR			APR			MAY		
	1-7	8-15	16-23	24-31	1-7	8-15	16-23	24-29	1-7	8-15	16-23	24-31	1-7	8-15	16-23
Black-bellied Plover											○	⊗	●	○	
American Golden-Plover															
Semipalmated Plover														●	●
Killdeer								⊗	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Black-necked Stilt															
American Avocet															
Greater Yellowlegs								○		●		○	⊗		
Lesser Yellowlegs									○	⊗		●	⊗	⊗	
Solitary Sandpiper															
Willet															
Spotted Sandpiper										○	●	○	●	●	●
Whimbrel															
Hudsonian Godwit															
Marbled Godwit															
Ruddy Turnstone														○	●
Red Knot														○	○
Sanderling														○	⊗
Semipalmated Sandpiper														●	●
Western Sandpiper														○	○
Least Sandpiper														●	●
White-rumped Sandpiper														○	○
Baird's Sandpiper															
Pectoral Sandpiper															
Purple Standpiper															
Dunlin											○	⊗	○	●	●
Stilt Sandpiper															
Buff-breasted Sandpiper															
Short-billed Dowitcher														○	○
Long-billed Dowitcher															
Wilson's Snipe								○							
Red Phalarope															

CONNEAUT SHOREBIRDS '91 - '04

SPECIES	JUN				JUL				AUG				SEPT				OCT				NOV				DEC			
	1-7	8-15	16-23	24-30	1-7	8-15	16-23	24-31	1-7	8-15	16-23	24-31	1-7	8-15	16-23	24-30	1-7	8-15	16-23	24-31	1-7	8-15	16-23	24-30	1-7	8-15	16-23	24-31
Black-bellied Plover					○		⊗		●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	⊗	●	⊗					
American Golden-Plover								○	○	⊗	●	⊗	⊗	●														
Semipalmated Plover	●	⊗			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○			○							
Killdeer	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○										
Black-necked Stilt																					○							
American Avocet					○		⊗	●	○	○		○		○			○				○							
Greater Yellowlegs	○				⊗	⊗	⊗	●	●	●	○	●	●	⊗	⊗	⊗	●	⊗	●	⊗	○							
Lesser Yellowlegs					⊗	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	⊗	○	●	●	⊗										
Solitary Sandpiper								⊗	○																			
Willet					⊗			○	●																			
Spotted Sandpiper	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○													
Whimbrel					⊗	○	○	○	○																			
Hudsonian Godwit																○	○											
Marbled Godwit															○	⊗	○	○	○									
Ruddy Turnstone										⊗	○	●	○	●	⊗	○												
Red Knot										○	⊗	⊗	●	⊗	⊗	○		○	○									
Sanderling										⊗	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	⊗	⊗	●	⊗			⊗	⊗		
Semipalmated Sandpiper	●	⊗			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	⊗	●	⊗	⊗	○	○	○				⊗	⊗		
Western Sandpiper									○	○	○			○	○											⊗		
Least Sandpiper					●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○		⊗								
White-rumped Sandpiper	⊗	○						●	○	○	○	●	⊗	⊗	⊗													
Baird's Sandpiper									●	●	●	●	○	⊗	⊗	●	○	○	○									
Pectoral Sandpiper								○	⊗	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●	⊗									
Purple Standpiper																					○	○	○					
Dunlin	⊗	○						○						●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	
Stilt Sandpiper								○	⊗	●	○	⊗	●	●	○	○	○											
Buff-breasted Sandpiper													○	●	●	○												
Short-billed Dowitcher										●	●	●	●	●	●	●	⊗	○										
Long-billed Dowitcher										○	○	○																
Wilson's Snipe														○	○	○	○	⊗										
Red Phalarope																					○							

A Golden-winged X Blue-winged Warbler Nest in Summit County

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Golden-winged warblers *Vermivora chrysoptera* are nearly extirpated as breeders in Ohio, with the most recent published nesting record coming from Columbiana County in 1991 (Peterjohn 2001). Historically, Wheaton (1882) described the golden-winged warbler as a rare summer resident. They have been reported breeding in the northeastern portion of Ohio before, but no confirmed records for Summit County could be found (Jones 1903, Hicks 1935, Dunn 1997, Peterjohn 2001). On 15 June 2004, a male golden-winged warbler was discovered at Horseshoe Pond in Cuyahoga Valley National Park in Summit County, Ohio. At approximately 6:00 P.M., the warbler was observed as it sang a type II song four or five times. It sang close to the top of a twelve-meter high snag near a forested edge. The territory was located in an oblong patch of early successional forest habitat with an area of two hectares, near a wooden bench that marks the halfway point of the Christmas tree farm trail (noted for its nesting purple finches). Within the entire territory, vegetation was dominated by herbaceous growth with patches of woody shrub, dead snags, isolated small trees and forested edge. This sighting represents the first confirmed breeding of golden-winged warbler in Ohio in more than a decade, although it was a hybridized nest.

Golden-winged warblers have two song types with intersexual (mate attraction) and intrasexual (territorial) meaning. Early in the breeding season, males will deliver type I song to announce a territorial boundary and its own physical presence (Highsmith 1989; Confer 1996). This song may be phonetically represented by the phrase "bee-buzz-buzz-buzz." During confrontational male-to-male interactions, males will switch to type II song, which begins with a few staccato notes (typically 2-3) and ends with a lower-pitched trill. This song is also given for about a half hour before sunrise from the beginning of the breeding season until the young fledge, and it is sung at a rapid rate. After sunrise, the type I song is given, but at a lower or intermittent rate. Highsmith (1989) reported observations of evening type II song. As the breeding season progresses, type I song becomes less frequent as males switch over to type II song.

Highsmith (1989) studied the two song types of male golden-winged warblers, and he found a correlation between song type II usage and a female's presence. When a female golden-winged warbler is located on a male's territory, there is no effect on the amount of short-duration type I or type II song given by the male. However, a female's presence strongly correlates with an abrupt drop in long-duration type I singing activity (Highsmith 1989). If a male golden-winged paired with a female blue-winged warbler *V. pinus*, the same effect might be expected. The Summit county male never gave the type I song when observed during the evening of 15 June or during four mornings between 20 June and 1 July. The male was not observed before sunrise to listen for the type II song that is typically given during that time period. The fact that the observed golden-winged

did not sing the type I song, but did sing the type II, suggested that it was nesting in the area.

At about 8:15 A.M. on 1 July, the male golden-winged warbler was observed feeding a yellowish, warbler-sized fledgling in a scotch pine in an area about 200 meters away from where it was originally discovered singing its type II song. The juvenile was yellowish in appearance, but no distinct plumage characteristics could be further detailed, since the warbler was facing forward. A few meters away, a female blue-winged warbler was seen feeding a yellowish juvenile. Again, the plumage of the juvenile could not be fully documented. Overall, both the adult and juvenal warblers were flighty and did not stay in one location very long.

Behaviorally, the male golden-winged warbler was consistent in flight direction when observed on its breeding territory (on 15, 20, 24 and 28 June). It flew away from its preferred song perch and across the trail towards a narrow section of open field wedged between a narrow stand of conifers and a wider mixed deciduous forest. That specific area, as well as contiguous ones, was exhaustively searched for a nest, but to no avail. On 20 June, the male left its preferred perch, and returned fifteen minutes later to forage about 30 meters from its song perch. This was the only time the warbler was observed foraging, and it consumed food that it collected, as opposed to carrying it away for nestlings or its mate. After foraging, it flew away in its typical flight path. The facts that the warbler consistently perched on the same dead tree on multiple days, sang type II song, and eluded detection during the last two observation days were all indications that it was a nester and not a summer visitor/wanderer. The discovery of the male feeding a fledgling confirmed these field observations. 🦉

Acknowledgment: The author wishes to thank Gabe Leidy for his assistance in nest searching and his help in finding the male golden-winged warbler and fledgling. I also wish to thank Dr. Ronald A. Canterbury (Concord University, WV) for inspiring me to check Horseshoe Pond annually for breeding golden-winged and hybrids.

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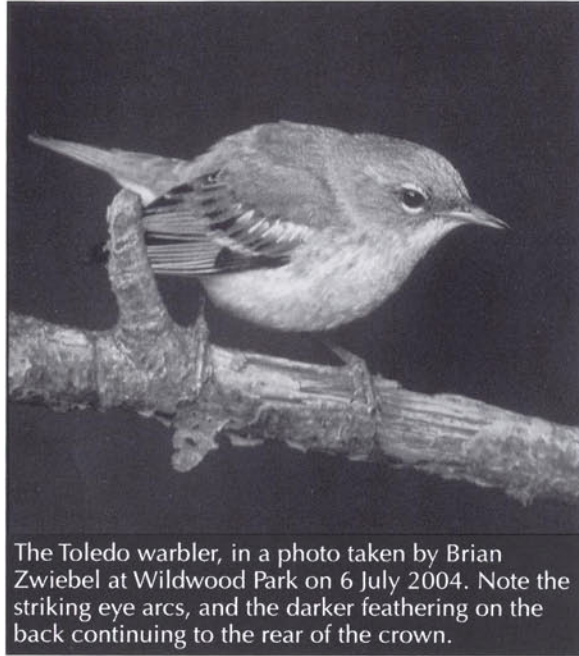
A Possible Northern Parula X Cerulean Warbler Hybrid in Toledo, Ohio

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It was early morning, 16 May 2004. A cold front had come through overnight and prevailing winds were out of the north, not good conditions for a passerine movement at Magee Marsh along the south shore of Lake Erie, where one would



The Toledo warbler, in a photo taken by Brian Zwiebel at Wildwood Park on 6 July 2004. Note the striking eye arcs, and the darker feathering on the back continuing to the rear of the crown.

normally find me birding in mid-May. So I thought I would check out Wildwood Preserve Metropark in Toledo because migrating birds tend to settle in such parks until the winds become southerly again. When I arrived at Wildwood it was a cool and slightly overcast morning, about 50 degrees, with very little wind. The woods were in all their springtime glory with oaks in full blossom lending a silvery look to the forest canopy, a favorite feeding location for warblers. As soon as I stepped out of my van I could hear Nashville, Blackburnian, and black-and-white warblers

singing, and I soon added Cape May and redstart in the rapidly moving flock. A hooded warbler sang from the low shrubs around the Manor House and a mourning warbler followed suit soon after. It was a good start to the morning.

I took a set of stairs down to the Ottawa River floodplain, adding magnolia warbler, scarlet tanager, and yellow-throated vireo to my day's list, where I came upon an unusual-looking warbler. It was bluish above, white beneath, and had two white wing bars. I thought I was seeing a cerulean warbler, but it lacked a breast band as well as the dark streaks expected on the sides. Furthermore, it had a prominent broken eye ring like a northern parula's, yet there was no yellow at all in the throat or breast and no greenish triangular patch on its back. And the blue, especially on the forehead, crown, and wings was a bright cerulean blue, not the blue typical of a parula. I watched the bird feed for about fifteen minutes, whereupon

it started singing the primary northern parula "zeeeeee-up" song. "Well, OK," I thought, "this must be an aberrant-plumaged parula." I watched the bird for another twenty minutes before moving on to see what other treasures this wonderful park would produce. I reported my sightings that afternoon on the Toledo Rare Bird Alert web site, including my observations of this odd-looking individual.

Over the next few weeks I occasionally heard the unusual-looking northern parula singing from the tops of some very large sycamores, but I often had a difficult time seeing the bird, since it tended to remain high in the foliage. Each time I encountered the bird between 16 May and 29 June it never failed to sing the same primary northern parula song. Usually I could get a clear enough look to determine it was the same bird I had seen on 16 May. On 7 June, the warbler joined a flock of birds mobbing a red-tailed hawk perched high in an oak.

Early June had me birding almost daily in western Lucas County, where I turned up another northern parula, this time at Secor Metropark in Toledo. It is noteworthy to have one northern parula in northwest Ohio this late in the season, let alone two. By the end of June things were slowing down a bit in the Oak Openings area and I hadn't been to Wildwood in a while, so I figured I'd check to see if any summer tanagers had shown up there.

On the morning of 30 June one of the first bird songs I heard was that of a cerulean warbler coming from the oaks in front of the Manor House. I was pretty excited because I had never seen a cerulean at Wildwood before, and certainly not in mid-summer. A quick search for the bird, however, turned up not the cerulean warbler I was expecting, but instead that same odd-looking northern parula I had been seeing since mid-May. Only this time it was singing the primary song of a cerulean warbler—"zray zray zray zreeeee"—not the northern parula song it had been using during all my previous visits. The bird was feeding in the oaks, moving quickly from branch to branch, foraging like a cerulean, just as it had on earlier occasions. It never displayed the slower, probing feeding behavior of a northern parula, and never hung upside down to probe leaf clusters as parulas often do.

I watched and listened to the bird for about forty minutes before it disappeared. Now, I realized, given the bird's appearance, behavior, and the combination of songs, I had to consider the possibility that it was a hybrid. I knew that there were a few records of northern parula x yellow-throated warbler resulting in the famous hybrid called "Sutton's" warbler," but I had never heard of a northern parula x cerulean warbler cross. Later, I went on-line to do a little searching. I came up with two reports from the "PABIRDS" Eastern Pennsylvania Birdline of a possible cerulean x northern parula in eastern Pennsylvania on 1 May 2003, and again on 10 May 2004. Though a year apart, both reports were of a bird seen at the Bethlehem Boat Club in Northampton County. Also, I found reference to an article in *The Kingbird*, an ornithological publication for the state of New York, of a northern parula and a cerulean warbler sharing nesting duties on Long Island in June 1994 (Lindsay & Vezo 1995). So I felt a little more confident in reporting something that was certain to be controversial. I decided to post my sighting on the Toledo Rare Bird

Alert website, suggest that it was possibly a hybrid, and look for opinions from other birders. The original posting plus Bob Jacksy's photo of the bird, are at <http://www.rarebird.org/forum/forum_posts.asp?TID=320&PN=1>.

The following day, 1 July, I returned to Wildwood to look for the bird again. It was in the same area but on this day it was singing two songs. It sang the primary cerulean song for about ten minutes but then switched to an alternate northern parula song before it flew off. On 2 July the bird had changed location, and for the third day in a row had altered its repertoire of songs. It was back down on the floodplain again, singing from the tops of sycamores, and now singing the primary song of the northern parula along with the same alternate parula song as the day before.

In summary, the bird's song from 16 May through 29 June was always the primary northern parula song, which sounded like songs 1 and 2 under northern parula's "Song type 1" in the *Stokes Field Guide to Bird Songs: Eastern Region*. On 30 June the warbler sang a primary cerulean song, which was reminiscent of the fifth, sixth, and seventh songs of cerulean warbler as recorded in the Stokes guide. On 1 July, the warbler sang both a primary cerulean song and an alternate northern parula song. The alternate northern parula song I heard from the Wildwood bird was similar to the fifth and sixth songs listed under "Song type 2" for northern parula in the Stokes guide. After 1 July, the warbler tended to sing mostly the alternate northern parula song, but occasionally it would also sing the typical primary parula song.

In response to my 30 June announcement, Bob Jacksy, an employee of Toledo Area Metroparks, on 3 July posted his photograph of the bird taken at the Window On Wildlife viewing area at Wildwood Preserve in early June. Jacksy's photo helped spur discussion of the bird on both the Toledo and the Ohio-Birds mailing lists. Jacksy's photo was also shared with a number of knowledgeable birders around the country.



Another view of the warbler, also taken 6 July by Brian Zwiebel.

Despite finally having photographic documentation that showed the unusual physical characteristics I had observed and described, I felt additional photographs of the warbler were needed. Two very talented photographers, Brian Zwiebel and Laura Stiefel, arranged to meet me at the park on 6 July. The bird was quiet when we arrived, but within a half hour it started to sing the alternate northern parula song. Zwiebel played the parula song from the *Peterson Field Guide to Bird Songs of Eastern and Central North America* on an MP3 player, and the warbler promptly came down to the speaker, allowing Zwiebel and Stiefel to take a number of pictures. The parula song was replayed twice with similar results, and then after a break of about twenty minutes, Zwiebel played the primary song of a cerulean warbler (again from the Peterson set), and the bird responded just as before, coming to the speaker to see where this other bird was. While Brian and Laura were getting their pictures, I was getting wonderful views of the bird through my binoculars from about twenty feet.

Both Zwiebel and Stiefel posted their photos of the warbler to the Toledo mailing list. Stiefel posted photos on 6 July and again on 7 July (see <http://www.rarebird.org/forum/forum_posts.asp?TID=324&PN=1> for the 6 July photos and <http://www.rarebird.org/forum/forum_posts.asp?TID=326&PN=2> for the 7 July photo.) Zwiebel posted his photos on 13 July (see <http://www.rarebird.org/forum/forum_posts.asp?TID=334&PN=1>). The photos showed the bird in excellent detail and helped spark even more conversation and debate about the bird's origins. Most of the discussion circulated on-line and through e-mail, including comments from two internationally recognized authorities, stated that hybridism was the best hypothesis for this bird's unusual appearance. One birder suggested it might be a northern parula lacking yellow pigments (a condition known as schizochroism) but, after viewing additional photographs, later felt that hybridism was more likely. Another experienced observer felt it was a second-year male cerulean with an extraordinarily unextensive prealternate molt.

We were lucky to get the pictures when we did, because after 6 July the bird began singing less frequently each day, utilizing either the typical northern parula song or its alternate.

Summary and Conclusion:

I find eight points worth keeping in mind when considering the origins of the Wildwood warbler:

- 1) The broken eye ring suggests a northern parula.
- 2) The brilliant blue in the forehead, crown, and wings was a bright cerulean warbler blue, not the typical blue of a northern parula. This color was much more evident in the field than in photographs of the bird.
- 3) There is some faint streaking on the sides near the shoulders, a characteristic that I don't think a northern parula would have.

- 4) The throat and breast were white, lacking any of the yellow tones one would expect in northern parula.
- 5) The back was a uniform dark bluish-gray from the mid-crown to the mid-back, lacking the greenish triangular patch of a northern parula.
- 6) The feeding behavior was like that of a cerulean warbler—the warbler moved quickly from branch to branch. It never displayed the slower, probing feeding behavior of a northern parula, and it never hung upside down to probe leaf clusters, as parulas often do.
- 7) The shape of the bird looked more like a cerulean warbler.
- 8) As noted above, the warbler employed songs similar to both primary cerulean and northern parula songs, in addition to alternate northern parula songs. It readily responded to playbacks of both cerulean and northern parula warbler songs.

While we will likely never know for sure whether it was a hybrid or an aberrant-plumaged individual, I see evidence of both species in this interesting warbler, and my best guess is that the bird I observed on multiple occasions at Wildwood Preserve in Toledo, Ohio is a hybrid northern parula x cerulean warbler. 🐦

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Prothonotary Warblers at Hoover Reservoir

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One of the most splendid of the wood warblers, a male prothonotary warbler *Protonotaria citrea* is not shy about showing off his exquisite plumage as he forages along the margins of his territory, nor about declaring his reign from an exposed perch. His loud song rings through the air, a distinctive “sweet-sweet-sweet-sweet” on one pitch. A brilliant golden yellow, he is hard to miss, but that does not mean this species is easy to find. The prothonotary warbler is on the “Watch List” for Ohio birds and is usually found only in low numbers in suitable habitat around the state.

The cause of its scarcity is the loss of its habitat throughout the state. Prothonotary warblers prefer backwaters with a canopy of trees, damp and swampy river bottoms, and low-lying woods flooded at times and in which woodland pools are left by receding water. This type of land is often considered useless, and is destroyed for development and farmland.

Prothonotary warblers are unique among the eastern warblers in nesting in cavities over or near water. They normally nest in natural cavities such as abandoned woodpecker holes in stumps 2-12 feet above water. While abandoned downy woodpecker holes are the sites most commonly chosen in Ohio, the warbler will nest in natural openings in dead branches or the broken top of a stump. When suitable cavities are unavailable, the birds will also nest in bluebird-type boxes located along narrow waterways. The availability of suitable cavities is the most critical habitat requirement for breeding prothonotaries.

Cavities are not, however, the only habitat feature required by the species. Generally essential for their presence are an abundance of willows and the proximity of water. Prothonotary warblers are rarely found far from the latter, whether a slow-running river or creek, a large wooded lake or—the species’ favorite—flooded bottomland forests.



This male prothonotary warbler at Hoover Reservoir should perhaps have been more grateful, but instead looks askance at the intrusion of benefactor and photographer Charlie Bombaci.

These locations offer many decaying trees with nest cavities in flooded areas and the added benefit of lower predation by mammals at nest sites located over water. Insect food for the nestlings is usually abundant in flooded areas. This specialization adds to the difficulties of finding suitable nesting habitat in Ohio. The northernmost reaches of Hoover Reservoir in Delaware County, however, do provide large tracts of appropriate habitat for prothonotary warblers. In 1988 several individuals recognized the value of these areas, and persuaded the City of Columbus to create the Hoover Nature Preserve.

Michael Bailey, then a graduate student at The Ohio State University, led the effort that resulted in the creation of the Hoover Nature Preserve and the future protection of an area rich in varied habitats and plant and animal species. We owe Michael a great debt. Michael chose the prothonotary warbler for his graduate studies. Jim Fry, then the naturalist at Blendon Woods Metro Park, put Michael in contact with me because of my familiarity with the Hoover Reservoir area, and thus I became involved with the prothonotary warbler nesting project there. Michael went on to become a college instructor and I have continued the nest project.

In 1988 there were four known pairs of prothonotary warblers at the preserve. That year we began installing nest boxes made from milk cartons. The birds readily took to the newly available nest sites and slowly their numbers began to climb. Our problem with the milk cartons, though, was that they had a short life of from four to six years. Realizing there were stronger box designs that would work, we began replacing milk cartons with wooden boxes. These boxes have weathered well, and as the number of birds increased I decided to increase the opportunities for them.

In the mid-1990s I found a helpful source for nest boxes--Darlene Sillick of the Ohio Bluebird Society--and my commitment to working with prothonotary warblers became a mini-crusade. I installed additional nest boxes farther and farther from where I had started. Construction companies have a credo: build, and they will come. Mine is similar: install nest sites, and they will nest. The results have left me awed. In 2001 I surpassed 30 prothonotary warbler territories for the first time. During the period 2001 through 2004 water levels at Hoover Reservoir have stayed high throughout the nesting season. The boxes remained over water and hence predators were not a problem; the warblers have flourished.

In 2004 I have another Ohio State graduate student working with these warblers. John Kuenzli is a pleasure to work with. John was looking for a site with adequate numbers of prothonotary warblers in order to do his graduate project, and I told him I should be able to fill the bill. He and I installed 51 new boxes just prior to the 2004 nesting season, aiming to replace boxes lost in 2003 storms and to expand the range of box locations. This brought the number of boxes placed around the preserve to approximately 150.

In 2004 we located 51 prothonotary warbler territories at the north end of Hoover Reservoir. John has managed to band approximately 30 males to enable him to monitor return rates in 2005. The band colors used are a red band on one leg and a silver band on the other. In addition to using the nest boxes, the warblers continue to use available natural cavities. At one site a pair selected a natural cavity just two feet from a nest box. I told John they were too proud to accept subsidized housing. All told, approximately 40 percent of the birds have selected natural cavities.

Prothonotaries are usually first observed at Hoover Reservoir about 15-20 April. The males generally arrive first, stake out their territories, then patrol them, singing. The females arrive approximately 10 days later, by which time all the males have established territories. Their "sweet-sweet-sweet-sweet" songs can be heard all around the upper end of Hoover Reservoir.

The prothonotary warbler is a strongly territorial species. The males will drive off others of their species, as well as competitors such as house wrens, tree swallows, and eastern bluebirds. Their territories can take any of several configurations: long and narrow, or square, or triangular. Most commonly, they run along the shore and are anywhere from 200 to 500 feet long and about 100 feet wide. In several areas of the preserve concentrations of territories lie side by side, averaging only 50 to 75 feet along the shore and extending about 250 feet back into the swamp forest. Here boundary squabbles are constant as the males test the limits.

The male will build one or more incomplete nests, adding just a shallow layer of moss to cavities scattered within its territory. The female eventually selects a mate and one of the dummy nest sites. Her first order of action is to redecorate the bachelor pad. She builds the real nest with mosses, rootlets, twigs, and leaves.

Prothonotary warblers must contend with house wrens, tree swallows, Carolina chickadees, and eastern bluebirds for available nest sites at Hoover Reservoir. The chickadees and bluebirds are minor competitors. House wrens, on the other hand, are major adversaries. Aggressive and numerous, they cram many prothonotary nesting boxes with sticks. If noticed early, before egg laying begins, their nest material may be removed to make boxes available for the warblers. Only after the warblers have established a territory will they protect a nest site. I let the wrens do their thing once the warblers have done so.

Nest construction for the prothonotary warbler begins during mid-May and continues into the first half of June. In general, the first clutches are produced between 20 May and 10 June and the young fledge between 15 June and 5 July. Re-nesting attempts and second broods have been noted at Hoover Reservoir, but are unusual. During the 2003 nesting season the latest clutch was found in the first half of July, with fledging in late August.

The female lays the eggs each morning, one egg per day, until all are laid. She usually lays 4 to 6 eggs, but I have encountered clutches ranging from 3 eggs to one with 8. The eggs are cream-colored with brown blotches. Incubation continues approximately two weeks from the date the final egg is laid. The hatchlings are an orange-red when they emerge and remain in the nest for about ten days before they fledge. The fledglings are well adapted to their wet environment: should they fall into the water when leaving the nest they are able to swim to safety by flapping their wings on the surface to reach the nearest snag and climb up.

Both adults feed the young, at intervals of 10 to 20 minutes. They sometimes arrive together, and at other times in turn. The male often flies directly to the entrance, where he hesitates before entering. He often emerges with a fecal sac that he carries far from the nest site before dropping. The female usually lands behind the nest box or nest cavity

first, then moves carefully around to the entrance.

The main predators prothonotary warblers must contend with are raccoons, northern water snakes, and humans. Raccoons are dangerous predators for the warblers; when water levels are down they can easily reach nest boxes and eat eggs or young. Experience has shown that nesting boxes should be monitored only from a distance when the water level is so low that the area under the boxes is dry. Raccoons have learned to follow the scent trail left by people monitoring the boxes. Losses to raccoons can be very high if you are not careful about leaving scent trails.

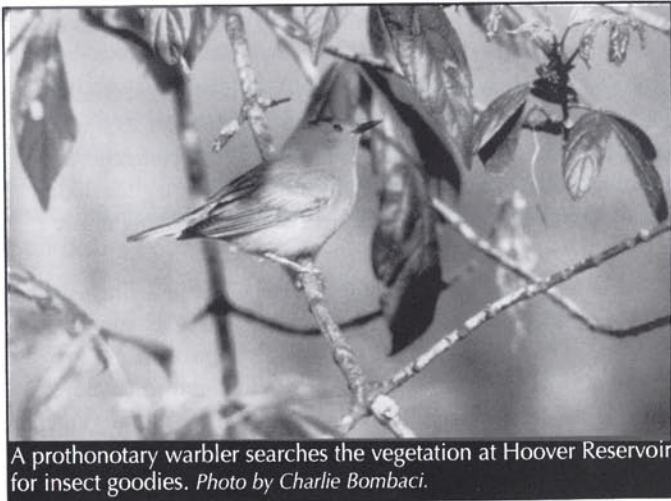
Fall migration begins in late July and is in full swing about 10-20 August. Prothonotaries observed here after this date are most likely from populations nesting farther north.

I have enjoyed the company of many individuals who discovered they could see these warblers close to home in central Ohio. This year Jon Dunn of Wings birdwatching tours contacted me during his tour through Ohio on the way to Magee Marsh. His California birders were rewarded with a show put on by the prothonotaries and other species found at the preserve.

WHERE TO FIND PROTHONOTARY WARBLERS AT HOOVER RESERVOIR

Prothonotary warblers inhabit the northernmost end of Hoover Reservoir during the breeding season. The better locations to find them include:

1. **Front Street** (signed Area N): This area is behind the Galena Municipal Building. Front Street circles behind the main strip. Turn onto Front Street, park next to Big Walnut Creek, and enter the old road beyond the chain barrier. There should be a Hoover Nature Preserve sign there. The road continues to an old bridge base. This area is wet woodland and swamp. In an average year four to seven pairs of prothonotary warblers nest here.



A prothonotary warbler searches the vegetation at Hoover Reservoir for insect goodies. Photo by Charlie Bombaci.

2. **Dustin Road:** Dustin begins at

Sunbury Road/Old Route 3C. Park in the space provided at the curve near the old railroad bridge (Area L) and walk along the Dustin Road's edge or down the old roadway. Prothonotary warblers nest along the water's edge. The old road, the small peninsula to the right, and along the Little Walnut Creek going north are good places to seek them. Usually three to four pairs may be located in this area.

3. **Wiese Road** (Area K): The entrance to the road is located across from the Blackhawk Golf Course on Old 3C Highway. Park at the barrier and walk the old road that parallels the shore (this is Area K). Usually two to five pairs are located here.

4. **East Shore Yacht Club/Old Sunbury Road:** The entrance is at the south side of Sunbury Road just east of Harlem/Woodtown Road. Park at the edge of the road, without blocking the entrance to the yacht club, then walk around the fence gate. The road forks quickly, and the dirt road to the left leads to a small inlet where several pairs are often located. If you go straight and follow the old roadway, the trail will continue for over a mile. Many sites for prothonotaries are along this roadway. The quickest way to locate them here is by song rather than by sight. In an average year there are ten to fifteen pairs along this stretch.

5. **Mud Hen Marsh.** This wetland is located at the intersection of Sunbury Road and Big Walnut Road. The entrance and parking lot are 100 yards west on Big Walnut Road. Mud Hen Marsh is an area of wetlands, controlled-succession forest, and swamp forest. The exit stream for the marsh goes under Big Walnut Road, and the bridge is a good area to look for prothonotary warblers. Along the shores near the bridge there are usually one or two pairs yearly.

6. **Oxbow Road.** Access is via Old 3C Highway and Tussic Road. Follow Oxbow Road across the causeway to the parking area at the end. Check the inlets on the north side and the wetland on the south side. Usually there are from three to five pairs present along Oxbow Road.

NEST BOX BASICS

Nest boxes come in many shapes and sizes, and choosing which to build or buy can be difficult. Be careful to select a design meant for prothonotary warblers. Features of a good wooden nest box for this purpose include: untreated wood (pine, cedar, or fir); thick walls (at least 3/4 inch); extended, sloped roof; rough or grooved interior walls; recessed floor drainage holes; ventilation holes; easy access for monitoring and cleaning; sturdy construction; no outside perches. General nest box specifications include: floor size 4x4 inches; height of box 12 inches; hole diameter 1 1/4 inches; height above water 3 to 5 feet.

Wooden nest boxes are successful in attracting prothonotary warblers. They can be attached to trees with galvanized wire, screws or long nails, or attached to poles. Most of my nest boxes are in areas with deep water, and I attach them to trees using galvanized wire placed through a hole provided at the top of the box and then looped around the tree trunk over a branch. A second wire is looped around the trunk through a hole at the bottom of the box. This allows for tree growth and does no damage to the tree. If the tree chosen is dead, I nail the top of the nest box to the trunk and loop galvanized wire around the tree at the bottom of the box. I paint my nest boxes with brown outdoor spray enamel. The enamel provides protection from the elements, and makes the coloration more to the birds' liking.

A second option is to build your own nest boxes out of milk cartons. Each box is constructed from two sealed, empty half-gallon coated cardboard milk cartons. The two

cartons are cut to specifications and then one is inserted into the other. The assembled nest box is painted inside and out with brown outdoor spray enamel. A hole 1 1/4 inches in diameter is made through the double layers of the milk cartons centered on one side, about three inches from the top. Small vent holes should be cut in the sides of the roof cap and drainage holes cut in the floor. The milk carton nest boxes are attached to trees with strong two-inch strapping tape. I suggest painting the tape to make it less obvious.

Assembly of milk carton nest boxes is easy and less time-consuming than that of wooden nest boxes. These nest boxes are also easy to carry and place as well as environmentally friendly. They are disposable and biodegradable. Milk carton nest boxes are readily accepted by the prothonotaries at Hoover Reservoir. In fact, our experience here indicates that prothonotary warblers prefer cardboard milk cartons to wooden boxes. The downside to milk cartons is that they are easily ripped apart by squirrels and raccoons, and their useful life is four to six years, whereas wooden boxes frequently survive for over a decade.

TIPS ON NEST BOX PLACEMENT

Make sure your nest boxes are in place well before the breeding season begins, by mid- to late March. Don't be discouraged if the birds do not begin nesting in your box immediately. Sometimes it takes time for the birds to find it. Proper nest site selection requires a bit of effort. Boxes should be set up in groups of four, spread over a potential territory. This will give the birds a choice of boxes, as males will prepare multiple false nests for females to look over. The boxes, each on its own tree or pole, should be placed about 35 feet apart and three to five feet above the high water level. The shape of the wooded area in which they are to be placed should determine the pattern in which the four boxes are arranged. Sites lacking underbrush are preferred; this will reduce the possibility of house wren nesting and predation.

Whether you attach your nest boxes to trees or use PVC pipes placed in the water, be sure your nest boxes are secure enough to withstand high winds and severe weather. Finally, nest boxes should be placed in such a way as to offer southern exposure and weather protection.

PROJECT PARTNERS: CARING AND SHARING

In many ways the future of the prothonotary warbler in Ohio is in our hands. Through conservation of habitat, nesting projects, and the sharing of experiences and techniques, we can achieve additional successes similar to those at Hoover Reservoir. I have given workshops for interested individuals and several county park systems through the Natural Resources section of the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department. I have begun to research data on prothonotary populations throughout the state via the internet, and provide information to many individuals interested in beginning their own nesting projects. I welcome questions and the sharing of information. Finally, the prothonotary warbler is on the Ten Most Wanted list of The Birdhouse Network project of The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, at www.birds.cornell.edu/birdhouse. Their web pages provide information on how to participate in this citizen science work on cavity-nesting birds. 🦋

Grouses and little gulls: An Editorial

Some words used for birds seem to defy common sense. Plural formation is a good example. Many people say one robin and two robins, but one teal and two teal. Identical singular and plural bird names commonly used include those of nearly all the ducks, grouse, bobwhite, snipe, killdeer, and woodcock. Why?

You almost never hear passerine birds—flycatchers, thrushes, warblers, finches—treated this way, as “a pair of nuthatch,” or “a thousand swallow.” Many species whose plurals are identical to their singulars are birds that form flocks, and many are fairly large species, but the common thread is something else: they are all game birds. For confirmation, consider the plural forms of these species: “deer,” “fish,” or “moose.” This is the way hunters refer to these animals collectively, and a lot of the rest of us follow suit—understandably so, because so many of those who write about ducks and deer(s) are hunters and use hunters’ lingo.

There are exceptions, but many of the names of animals taken as game have identical singulars and plurals. One is tempted to attribute this to an underlying assumption that these animals are somehow not properly regarded as individuals, but rather as undifferentiable flesh, or food—a commodity. Domestic animals regarded as commodities, however—perhaps because we live more closely with them—usually have separate plural forms: cows, pigs, chickens, etc., though we do not have “sheeps.” Many of them have different collective plurals: cattle, swine, fowl, with still other names, usually of quite different origins, for their flesh used as food: beef, veal, pork, lamb, mutton, etc. This is all very complicated, and fascinating to study or speculate about both psychologically and philologically, and English usage continues to evolve with our culture.

Scientists employ useful contrasts between singular and plural forms. Milton Trautman called his work *The Fishes of Ohio* because he treated species separately, reserving “fish” as a collective noun referring to fish of any or many species. This is a useful compromise, but the trend among words for birds—as fewer and fewer species are treated as game or food in English-speaking cultures—is toward standard plural forms. It would be odd to see a modern scientific work entitled “Pheasant of the World,” or “Feeding habits of scoter in Buzzard’s Bay.” *The Ohio Cardinal* sides with the scientific trend, saying “teals,” “scaups,” “snipes,” and “killdeers” as plurals, even if they may strike readers as a little strange at first. Your editor, for example, is perfectly at home with all of them except perhaps “grouses,” and he’s getting used to that.

While we are talking about usage in the *Cardinal*, it might be time to mention our style as to capitalization of bird names. It puzzles some readers. We do not capitalize bird names, or parts thereof, except as required by standard grammar. Thus, we do not capitalize “gadwall” unless it begins a sentence, or a list entry in column form. We use “Blackburnian warbler” because the first word is derived from a proper name, that of Anna Blackburne, an eighteenth-century English botanist. We avoid “Purple Martin,” its capital letters jarring as “House Cat” or “Dandelion” or “Honey Bee.”

Some have argued that capitalizations are useful in preventing ambiguity. There are actually very few examples among thousands of bird names, but “yellow warbler”

and “little gull” are always trotted out in defense of this position. The fact is that in ornithological publications no careful editor would allow the ambiguous use of these names. If you see “yellow warbler” here, rest assured it means *Dendroica petechia*.

The often-heard assertion that the English names of birds are proper nouns and must be capitalized ignores standards of grammar. Proper names are normally singular in form, and do not easily accept limiting modifiers. They represent one of a kind, but a yellow warbler is not unique. While there are exceptions (counting names “We have five red-headed Roberts in this class,” or shared surnames “Who killed the Kennedys?” or metaphors “They were the Churchills of China”), proper nouns like Canada and Empire State Building and Confucius resist pluralization or even the indefinite article “a.” Test it yourself. This is not the case with bird names. We can see some veeries, each of them a different individual legitimately sharing the name. A veery is one of many kinds of birds, and there are lots of veeries. The word does not rate a capital letter every time it is used, unlike “Euphrates” or “Marcus Garvey” or “North America.”

Most respected periodicals on science do not capitalize bird names. You won’t see misplaced capitals in journals like “Science,” “Scientific American,” “Nature,” “Ecology,” “American Scientist,” “Audubon,” or “Natural History.” You won’t see bird names capitalized in your dictionary, or in your newspaper, any more than in publications of The Nature Conservancy. Revered nature writers like Aldo Leopold, John Burroughs, Joseph Wood Krutch, Stephen Jay Gould, and John Kricher don’t capitalize bird names. Nor do distinguished ornithological authors like Bernd Heinrich, Paul Johnsgard, Brian Harrington, Allan Cruickshank, Peter Mathiessen, or Steven Hilty.

You won’t see capitalized English species names in the professional journals of most of the sciences. The notable exception is ornithology. Ornithologists follow Audubon’s and Wilson’s eighteenth-century usage. Their works resemble old documents like the US Constitution, where all nouns are capitalized (We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice,...) more than modern prose. The time-honored system of scientific nomenclature insists that names should be singular and unequivocal, and there are elaborate and elegant rules to govern binomial scientific names to ensure this. Ornithology has gone further, standardizing English names for birds, and for all the same reasons this is a good idea.

Regularizing English names has seemed advisable also because of the large role amateurs have always played in bird study, as well as birds’ significance for other non-scientists---good reasons to engage a large and diverse community in unambiguous discourse. But birds’ names are not brand names like Twinkies®, and do not require capitalization. I have seen some editors treat these bird “brand names” as so sacrosanct as to require bizarre plural forms such as “Veerys” or “boobys” to avoid infringing on their supposedly inviolable integrity. Their strict obedience to the American Ornithologists’ Union policy on English names is touchingly reverential, but misguided.

Unnecessary capitals are stilted, puzzling to most readers, and unsanctioned by present-day standards of grammar or usage. They are, moreover, unnecessary for clear communication. As much as we honor the AOU’s scientific pronouncements, they have no qualifications in English prose. We’d no sooner go to the AOU for advice on that topic than we’d ask a carpenter how to make soup. We were writing “Ross’s goose” when they still insisted on the erroneous “Ross’ goose,” and we will continue using standard English usage to work with common bird names as well. ---BW

The Ohio Cardinal

A Parting Shot . . .



The presumed nesting attempt at Big Island WA in Marion Co. by the pair of black-necked stilts led to multiple observers having the opportunity to view these attractive creatures. Jay Lehman digiscoped this image from 50-75 yards 9 June 2004.