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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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On the Cover: An adult Mississippi kite fed an insect to a juvenal bird in Hocking County 31 August 2007, establishing Ohio's first breeding record in the historical period. Photo by Aaron Boone.

Summer 2007 Overview and Reports

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June of 2007 in Ohio was warmer than usual, and July cooler, both by a couple of degrees; still, Dayton experienced its third-coolest July on record. More significantly, the summer's weather was considerably drier than normal, with the southwest and south-central counties experiencing pronounced drought. The apple crop was fine from Knox County north, but a disaster to the south. Spring's erratic weather will affect our birdlife well into next year. For example, two large sweetgum trees in the editorial front yard, which in a normal year produce a couple of pickup-loads of fruit, suffered enough from April's freeze that this year's crop of "monkey-balls" won't fill one's hat. Seeds from these and many other local plants will furnish no food for birds in the coming fall and winter.

At this time of year, birds are at their most conservative in choosing habitat, because reproduction is at stake. Outlying areas at airports, for example, continue as refugia for declining grassland nesters like meadowlarks, certain sparrows, and upland sandpipers. Apparently airport managers have found that taller grass, inviting to these species, discourages more bothersome starlings and Canada geese, thus airport margins are less often mowed than agricultural lands. Bird observers are less welcome than ever at such places, but the birds at least are tolerated. Upland sandpipers were abundant in Ohio not so long ago, when pastures were a part of farmlands; in the '30s Hicks found them nesting in 76 Ohio counties; now many 'pastures' are at airports; every Ohio county has an airport, and all are worthy of study for birds. Lark sparrows, birds of drier climes and denizens in Ohio of rare sand "blow-out" habitats—such as reliable areas in the Oak Openings near Toledo—also turned up as breeders in waste areas where native vegetation has not regained a foothold, such as abandoned quarries and gravel pits. Little backwaters or chinks of wild or semi-wild habitat out in the vast agricultural stretches of the state's west also were, when scrutinized by atlasers, found surprisingly productive of birdlife. We were also made aware of how human fragmentation of the landscape—shelterbelts of trees in the prairie, or even a golf course in forested country, can enable birds like the Mississippi kite to reclaim ancestral territory or even exploit new areas. Will highwalls in abandoned strip-mines give common ravens a foothold to return to Ohio?

Increased coverage and reporting accompanying the *Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas* project yielded a bounty of unusual nesting or at least summering records among more common species as well. The Atlas is advancing our knowledge of Ohio's birdlife extensively. Perhaps one cannot salute the sacrifices of Ohio birders who have helped in this effort—most say they're having too much fun—but their contributions will be significant and lasting. More discoveries will follow in years to come, and new help is always needed from the birding community to ensure coverage is adequate. *Cardinal* readers are encouraged to help all they can with this project.

Review species reported this summer included tricolored heron, Mississippi kite (two), Eurasian collared-dove (numerous), scissor-tailed flycatcher (two), and common raven (three), a list impressive less for its length

than for including two new breeding species for Ohio in the modern era, and the possible return of a species that last bred here over a century ago. Shorebird migration continued as usual through most of the summer, with both late and early reports of these prodigious migrants during June. Little habitat for most shorebirds, beyond the beleaguered beach at Conneaut and drawn-down upper ends of municipal and state park reservoirs, was available. Daylong censuses of birds at mighty Ottawa NWR, for example, produced only three spotted sandpipers and 19 killdeers on 3 June, then three spotties and 34 killdeers on 1 Jul. Still, 26 shorebird species were reported during the two months of the summer season elsewhere. Reports of interest from the NW marshes were sparse overall this season.

The July issue of the *Auk* announced revisions to the North American checklist by the American Ornithologists' Union's Committee on Classification and Nomenclature. This is where interested persons can find official changes in names of birds, additions to and subtractions from the standard checklist, various lumps and splits, and other taxonomical changes. As they affect Ohio directly, there were few important revisions in this round. On the basis of DNA evidence, the belted kingfisher's generic name is changed from *Ceryle* to *Megaceryle*. The vultures and condors (family Cathartidae) have returned to the Falconiformes after a few years among the herons, storks, etc. in Ciconiiformes; the Committee acknowledges this decision remains iffy.

The Reports follow the nomenclature and taxonomic order of the 7th edition of the AOU Check-list of North American Birds (1998), including the 48th Supplement (July 2007), except for the capitalization of English names of birds, where we follow standard English usage. 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 attributions (i.e., reporters' names) in the Reports. Where supplied, county names appear *italicized*. Unless numbers are specified, sightings refer to single birds. Abbreviations, conventions, locations, 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; CPNWR=Cedar Point NWR in *Lucas*; CVNP=Cuyahoga Valley Natl Pk in *Cuyahoga* and *Summit*; Deer Ck WA is in *Pickaway/Fayette*; Dike 14=the Gordon Park impoundment in Cleveland; EFSP=East Fork SP in *Clermont*; eop=end of the period, in this case 31 July 2007; EHSP=East Hbr SP in *Ottawa*; fide="in trust of," said of data conveyed on behalf of another person; Funk WA is in *Wayne*; 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*; Hoover=Hoover Res in *Franklin/Delaware*; HWS=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*; MCWS=Mill Creek Wildlife Sanctuary in *Mahoning*; Metzger=Metzger Marsh WA in *Lucas*; MP=Metropark; m obs=many observers; MWW=Miami-Whitewater Wetlands in *Hamilton*; NWR=National Wildlife Refuge; OBBA=Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas, second edition; OBRC=Ohio Bird Records Committee; ODOV=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; SCBC=Greater Akron Audubon Society Summit County Bird Census of 15-24 June; SF=State Forest; SNP=State Nature Preserve; SP=State Park; Springville Marsh SNP is in *Seneca*; SVWA=Spring Valley WA in *Greene/Warren*; VOA=Voice of America Park in *Butler*; WA=Wildlife Area.

The Reports: Summer 2007

Mute swan: Present in accustomed spots, as with 24 on the SCBC in *Summit* 15-24 Jun. Elsewhere, a pair with seven young was reported from *Warren* 5 Jun (J. Van Coney), where infrequent in summer.

Wood duck: Fifty-plus deserters from parental duties were found at **Killbuck** as early as 6 Jun (S. Snyder).

Gadwall: Males lingered at **Metzger** (K. Kaufman) and **Dorset WA** in *Ashtabula* (J. Heflich) 3 Jun; a female was found at the latter location 10 Jun, but nesting was unconfirmed (Heflich).

American wigeon: Lingered into early Jun at several spots in the NW marshes, and reported as a probable nester in a **Sandusky Bay** marsh 24 Jun (M. Shieldcastle).

American black duck: J. Heflich reported a hen with brood of 6-8 in *Ashtabula* 3 Jun. T. Kemp saw an unaccompanied one in *Wood* 10 Jun.

Northern shoveler: Tardy individuals were in *Union* 3 Jun (R. Thorn) and in *Wood* 10 Jun (T. Kemp). A territorial drake was reported from *Union* 28 May (C. Morrow).

Green-winged teal: A pair remained at **Metzger** 3 Jun (K. Kaufman), and a drake at an *Ashtabula* marsh 5 Jun (C. Holt). A drake at **Deer Ck SP** 4 Jul may have been a non-breeder (B. Royse). D. Sanders saw a drake 9 Jul at a **Hardin** site that had hosted nests last year.

Redhead: K. Miller observed an apparently healthy drake in *Portage* through 1 Jun. M. Shieldcastle confirmed nesting at **Willow Point WA** on 24 Jun, with ducklings present.

Ring-necked duck: An alternate-plumaged male in *Paulding* 1 Jun-1 Jul may well have been injured (M&D Dunakin).

Lesser scaup: R. Counts found a hen at the **Hardin** wetlands 2 Jun, and G. Stauffer a drake at **Pickerington Ponds** near **Columbus** 6 Jun.

Hooded merganser: Broods found away from the NW marshes included three in *Delaware* during the period (*fide* C. Bombaci), a hen with young 3 Jun in *Ashtabula* (J. Heflich) and eleven young elsewhere in the county 5 Jun (C. Holt), a possible nesting at **Deer Ck SP** 9 Jun (B. Royse), young at **Dillon SP** 26 Jun (V. Smith), and a hen with chicks at **GLSM** 13 Jun (G. Dietz).

Common merganser: J. Dolan reported hens with young seen in the **Beaver Creek** drainage at both **Fredericktown** and upstream, and near **Negley**; he also observed a hen leaving a cavity at **Beaver Ck SP**, as well as four other hens displaying territorial behavior. J. Hendrickson observed a family with five young in that creek 10 Jun.

Red-breasted merganser: Odd reports came from a **Findlay** res 6 Jun (J. Taber), **Kelleys Isl** 16 Jun (T. Bartlett), and **Conneaut** on 10 Jul (C. Holt).

Ruddy duck: As usual, apparently nonbreeding summering birds showed up. The **Paulding** sewage lagoons hosted five drakes 1-14 Jun (D&M Dunakin). The **Hardin** wetlands had three males and two females 2 Jun (R. Counts) and three males 4 Jul, then four on 9 Jul (D. Sanders). Similarly inconclusive reports came from **Trumbull** 3 Jun (E. Kistler) and another **Hardin** site 7 Jul (C. Hoagstrom).

Common loon: A few imm. stayed put as always, reported in **Portage** 2 Jun (G. Bennett), at **Nimisila Res** in **Summit** 4 Jun (R&S Harlan), and in **Hamilton** on 7 Jul (N. Keller).

Pied-billed grebe: Summer reports away from the NW marshes seem to be increasing, with five 2 Jun at the **Hardin** wetland, with four breeding pairs by 4 Jul (R. Counts), two pairs with young in **Ashtabula** 3 Jun (J. Heflich), one in **Wilmington** 11 Jun (B. Thobaben *vide* B. Powell), one at **MWW** 4 Jul (E. Burkholder), and one at **GRWA** on 24 Jul (C. Holt). The 3 Jun census tallied eight at **ONWR**.

Double-crested cormorant: Breeding pairs estimated ($\pm 10\%$) at **West Sister Island** numbered 1967, down 27.4% from last year; no wonder, since at this spot 1932 birds were shot off nests this spring as part of a control program (USF&WS). The **ONWRC** tallied 40 for its 3 Jun census nearby, then 17 on 1 Jul. In Ohio overall, the culling totaled 3500+ (USDA). Cormorants nesting at the **Columbus** heron rookery had at least two nestlings on 10 Jun, with four on 14 Jun (M. Brehmer). D. Kramer confirmed continued breeding at **West Res** near **Akron**, with eight nests 8 Jun.

American bittern: Few reports, the earliest 6 Jun at **Hoover Res** (C. Bombaci), and one each from **Ottawa** and **Lucas** during the period (M. Shieldcastle).

Least bittern: Away from traditional spots were single birds seen in **Wood** 9 Jun (C. Anderson), at **Lake Logan** in **Hocking** 14 Jun (J. Alexander), at **MCWS** 2 Jul (B. Jones), at **MWW** 10 Jul (J. Kappa), at **Mentor Lagoons** 22-25 Jul (J. Talkington *vide* R. Hannikman), and confirmed as breeding during the period at **Arcola Ck** (J. Pogacnik).

Great blue heron: Breeding pair estimates ($\pm 10\%$) on **West Sister Island** numbered 953, down 24.8% from last year. On 8 Jul, almost 100 stalked **Medusa Marsh** (C. Caldwell). C. Babyak reported reduced numbers on 25 Jun of 283 nests (after 385 seen on 22 Mar, w/many downed nests) at the **Lordstown** colony, likely a result of storm damage.

Great egret: Breeding pair estimates ($\pm 10\%$) on **West Sister Island** numbered 760, down 28.8% from last year; managers thought storms were to blame. L. Warren found three great egret nests in a **Youngstown** heron rookery, with three young in two of the nests and 2 young in the third nest around July 20. M. Brehmer reported the first of two nests at the **Columbus** heronry on May 18, with two egrets on two nests 22 May; later, a third nest was suspected but not confirmed; two young were first seen June 15. At least one nest was detected 10 Jun in a heronry at **Indian Lake** in **Logan** 14 Jun (T. Shively). The **ONWRC** found 58 on 3 Jun, when an oddball was seen in **Ashtabula** (J. Heflich), two elsewhere were seen in that county on 5 Jun (C. Holt), and one in **GRWA** in **Trumbull** three days later (C. Babyak). J. Stenger reported one in **Cincinnati** 30 Jun, and concentrations as large as 260+ at **Medusa Marsh** and 45 at **Pipe Creek WA** were reported on 8 Jul (C. Caldwell). By 18 Jul, 24 could be found at **MCWS** (B&D Lane), and on the 23rd 30 at a **Columbus** site.

Snowy egret: Breeding pairs estimated at **West Sister Island** were 12, down from 15 from last year. Three were found on the **ONWRC** of 3 Jun. **Pipe Creek WA** welcomed some with six there 15 Jul (J. Petruzzi) and eight on the 22nd (B. Whan). One visited **Columbus** 2 Jul at Whittier Park (J. Watts).

Tricolored heron: **Pipe Creek WA** reportedly hosted one 8 Jul; details are with the **OBRC**.

Cattle egret: Breeding pairs estimated at **West Sister Island** numbered 16, well up from 4 last year; 10 were found in 2005. One at the **Indian Lake** heronry in **Logan** on 14 Jun could not be verified as a nester (T. Shively). No reports from or near colonies at **GLSM** or **Turning Pt Isl** in **Sandusky** this summer.

Green heron: Especially well reported because of the **OBBA**. Double-digit reports included 10 for the 3 Jun **ONWRC**, 56 for the **SCBC** of 15-24 Jun, 40+ in a morning flyover at **Guilford Marsh** in **Columbiana** (B&D Lane), and 15 probable nest sites in the **Lake** MPs during the season (J. Pogacnik).

Black-crowned night-heron: Breeding pairs estimated ($\pm 10\%$) at **West Sister Island** were 460, down a less than significant 4.2% from last year; it is puzzling how few of these birds are encountered nearby on the mainland during the season, with this summer's high count only 5, for the 3 Jun **OWNRC**. The **Spring Grove Cem** colony topped out at 11 adults, with eight tending nests, on 4 Jul (F. Renfrow). Four were at **Deer Ck SP** 4 Jul (B. Royse), one at the **Shaker Lks** 22 Jul (L. Deininger), and an adult at **Berlin Res** 24 Jul (C. Holt). Small breeding colonies are suspected but not yet confirmed at several other inland locations.

Yellow-crowned night-heron: Four adults were found at a fish pond in **Gallia** on 10 Jun (M. Bowman, L. Clingman); the property owner reported two had frequented the area last year at the time. Two nests at the **Columbus** colony produced a robust ten young by 26 Jun (B. Whan); they remained 3 Jul (L. Dornan), but all but three had vacated the site by 14 Jul (R. Epstein). D. Marsh photographed a young bird along **Darby Creek** in **Franklin** on 23 Jul. The census team reported three at **Ottawa NWR** on 1 Jul in a very interesting appearance. Twenty-three in one year is likely a recent record.

Black vulture: A sighting over **Calamus Swamp** in **Pickaway** 28 Jul was a veteran observer's first in eight years there (D. Horn).

Turkey vulture: Unusual was a single large scattered group of 375 birds seen in **Tuscarawas** 12 Jul (E. Schlabach).



Low water and lots of atlasers out in the field combined to produce copious reports of green herons this summer. This one was at Beaver Pond in the CVNP on 13 July. Photo courtesy of Bob Roach.

Osprey: The ODOW estimated at least 43 nests in the state, and ~75 young hatched. Decidedly unusual was four fledglings at a **Salt Fork Res** nest in late Jul (J. Larson).

Mississippi kite: First reported 7 Jun at a golf course near **Logan** in **Hocking** (A. Elberfeld). Photos were obtained of two birds there on 21 Jun (T. Shively). Testimony subsequently emerged that kites had been seen copulating at the site on 4 Jun. On 31 Aug, this was confirmed as Ohio's first modern nesting record (A. Boone, ph) with discovery of a juvenile. Kite bones found in a prehistoric village site not far away in **Jackson** and active several hundred years ago suggest this species nested in Ohio formerly. One was spotted at **Point Pelee** headed south on 5 Jun (A. Wormington); this **Ontario** location just a few miles to our north has 32 accepted Mississippi kite records, more than twice the whole state of Ohio's. **Indiana** recorded a nest in a new county in its SW corner this year (*vide* D. Gorney); these are the closest nests to Ohio's, and while Ohio's nest record is among the northernmost of this century, the species is suspected of nesting in Iowa north of the latitude of Chicago in the past. Overall, it seems the kite is less likely expanding its range lately than reclaiming ground lost since the 19th century.

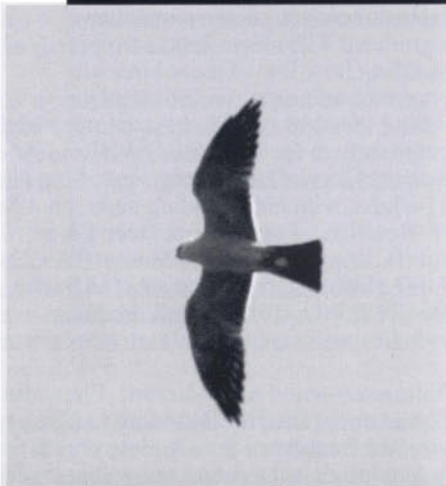
Bald eagle: The number of its **Ohio** nests increased for the twentieth straight year, with 164, 115 of which produced 186 eaglets in 45 counties (ODOW). In June, this species was elevated out of Federal "Endangered" status.

Northern harrier: Reports came of a female at **The Wilds** 1 and 3 Jun (A. Parker), one in **Ashtabula** 3 Jun (J. Heflich), one in **Lucas** 13 Jun (C. Anderson), one near **Bowling Green** 14 Jun (B. Cullen), a female in **Gallia** 7 Jul (B. Sparks), and a female at **Mosquito Lk WA** 24 Jul (C. Holt).

Merlin: A flyby on Jul 20th at the **VOA** (L. Brumbaugh) was of note, far too early for a normal fall migrant.



Photographer Debra Marsh was ready for the appearance of a young yellow-crowned night-heron at Darby Creek along the Madison/Franklin county line on 23 July.



A challenging subject, this soaring Hocking Co. Mississippi kite shows the pale head, fanned dark tail, and short outer primaries diagnostic for the species. Photo by Robert Epstein 14 July.

King rail: Almost went unreported, had it not been for intrepid kayaker S. Brown's foray into backwaters at **Turkeyfoot Lk** in **Summit** 18-29 Jun, and T. Bartlett, who had one at **Springville Marsh** through the period.

Virginia rail: Under-reported, one hopes. B&D Lane found four at **Guilford Marsh** in **Columbiana** 18 Jun, and three young with an adult were at the **CVNP's Ira Rd.** site 14 Jul (D. Chasar). Other reports came from **Ashtabula, Wood, Sandusky, Erie, Lorain, Hardin, and Morrow.**

Sora: Also sparsely reported, with three from the 3 Jun **OWNRC** and one at **GRWA** on 8 Jul (J. Heflich), and probable breeding in ten other northern counties.

Common moorhen: Reported from **KPWA** (one 28 Jul, P. Gardner), **Clermont** (5 Jun, B. Foppe), at **GRWA** (w/ four young 14 Jul, J. Heflich), at **SVWA** (w/ eight young 26 Jun, T. Uhlman), and at **MCWS** (C. Holt 9 Jul). OBBA reports of probable nesting and better came from seven other localities.

American coot: Under-reported or perhaps diminished in the NW marshes, with a grand total of three from the Jun and Jul **ONWR** censuses. Elsewhere, 41 were in the **Hardin** wetland 2 Jun, and many, including young, there 4 Jul (R. Counts). an ad with young was at **Glacier Ridge MP** in **Union** 5 Jul (J. Watts), while G. Stauffer spotted one at **Pickerington Ponds MP** in **Fairfield** 6 Jun and J. Alexander another at **Lake Logan** in **Hocking** the following day. C. Bombaci observed copulating birds in **Delaware** 31 May. B. Royse reported a possible nest at **Deer Ck SP** 9 Jun. Breeding was confirmed in **Wood** 9 Jun (C. Anderson). One was found in **Jefferson** 20 Jul (A. Boone). May have bred in **Erie** (P. Chaon) and **Seneca** (M. Shieldcastle).

Sandhill crane: Following a 30 May report from s. **Franklin** (R. Thorn), D. Horn reported one in **Pickaway** 2 Jun. J. Heflich saw a pair in **Ashtabula's** Dorset Twp 10 Jun, and heard several calling 21 Jul in **Troy Twp** in **Geauga** (*vide* D. Best, probably from 1-2 locally nesting pairs); a pair with two colts seen in a familiar locale near **Burton** may have been the same (B. Faber). C. Caldwell noted the **Sandy Ridge** pair on 11 Jul. A **Morrow** record was established by a pair with a colt seen there 5 Jul (G. Denny *vide* J. Watts).

Black-bellied plover: Usually scarce in summer. Probably sitting out the breeding season were three in basic plumage on 13 Jun at **Metzger** (K. Kaufman). The only returnees reported were two at **Conneaut** on 19 Jul (C. Holt).



A Virginia rail at Guilford Lk Marsh in Columbiana Co. accommodated photographer Bob Lane on 14 June.

American golden-plover: Unreported to us during the summer period.

Semipalmated plover: Lingering were 16 at **Metzger** 3 Jun (K. Kaufman). Two returned to **Conneaut** 17 Jul (C. Holt), and 16 were found in **Morgan** 27 Jul (G. Crippen).

Killdeer: Deceptively common in Ohio, as its populations are declining overall. Three-figure reports came in July, and included ~100 on the 1st at **Wright Marsh** in **Wayne** (K. Ostermiller), 118 at one spot in **Deer Ck SP** 4 July (B. Roysse), ~220 at **Hoover Res** 21 Jul (J. Kuenzli), and 100+ at **Berlin Res** 26 Jul (C. Holt).

American avocet: At **Conneaut**, C. Holt observed two on 17 Jul and two more 26 Jul. J. Taber found three at a **Findlay Res** on 12 Jul, and two on 31 Jul (*fide* B. Hardesty). A. Wolfe spotted one at **PCWA** on 22 Jul.

Spotted sandpiper: R. Counts spotted a remarkable 16 at the **Hardin** wetlands on 2 Jun. The largest gathering of southbound migrants, of 29 birds, was at **Hoover Res** 21 Jul (J. Kuenzli).

Greater yellowlegs: Down in reported numbers across the state, with a high of only five, at **Conneaut** on 24 Jul (C. Holt). One remained at the **Hardin** wetland 2 Jun (R. Counts), and on 30 Jun E. Tramer noted this species at **CPNWR**, no doubt as a southbound migrant.

Willet: A single report, of two birds at **Conneaut**, came 17 Jul (C. Holt).

Lesser yellowlegs: The first apparently southbound appeared at **Conneaut** on 17 Jun (C. Holt). At **Farnsworth Pk** in **Lucas**, 25 was a good number on 7 Jul (E. Tramer), and by 14 Jul 40 were at **PCWA** for C. Pierce, along with only two greater yellowlegs. High count 75+ on the river south of **Huron** 22 Jul (B. Whan).

Solitary sandpiper: The first fall returnees were two reported 9 Jul at **Caesar Ck SP** (L. Gara). At **MCWS**, 11 were present 16 Jul (B. Jones), then 30+ 18 Jul (B&D Lane). The high count was 35 at **Berlin Res** 26 Jul (C. Holt).

Upland sandpiper: G. Cowell observed five at the **Mansfield** airport 10 Jun, and P. Rodewald three at Don Scott Field near **Columbus** 19 Jun. One was in **Dorset Twp** in **Ashtabula** 3 Jun (J. Heflich) and a likely breeding pair in **Hardin** (R. Counts) 21 Jun-10 Jul.

Whimbrel: Adults appeared on schedule with two at **Conneaut** 15 Jul (*fide* C. Holt), and on 24 Jul two there and one at **West Branch SP** in **Portage** (both Holt).

Marbled godwit: Researcher A. Lindsay photographed a rare summer visitor 24 and 29 Jun at the **ONWR** end of **Metzger**.

Ruddy turnstone: On 3 Jun were ~20 and a straggler 13 Jun at **Metzger** (K. Kaufman), and equally ahead of schedule were two at the **Findlay Res** 10 Jul (B. Hardesty).

Red knot: Last reported were two at **Metzger** 3 Jun (K. Kaufman), with the first returnee 24 Jul at **Hoover Res** (C. Bombaci).

Sanderling: Returned in the form of one at **Conneaut** 17 Jul, six there the 19th, and the high count of seven the 24th (all C. Holt). **Hoover Res** hosted three on 28 Jul (P. Gardner).

Semipalmated sandpiper: Numerous reports from Jun, the latest of two at **Metzger** the 13th (K. Kaufman). On schedule were returnees at **Hoover** (12 on 6 Jul, C. Bombaci), three at **Camp Dennison** the 11th (B. Foppe), with 100+ at **PCWA** by the 22nd (B. Whan).

Western sandpiper: Not often seen in Ohio, an alt adult lingered at **Metzger** as late as 13 Jun (K. Kaufman), and another returned at **BCSP** 15 Jul (D. Overacker). The first **Conneaut** report came from 19 Jul (C. Holt), with one at **Hoover** on the 27th (C. Bombaci).

Least sandpiper: Not absent for long, three were late at **Metzger** 13 Jun (K. Kaufman), and a pair touched down at **Conneaut** 27 Jun (C. Holt), with five inland in **Hardin** 4 Jul (R. Counts). Higher counts included 30-50 at **PCWA** 14 Jul (C. Pierce) and 40 at **Hoover** 21 Jul (J. Kuenzli).

White-rumped sandpiper: Lingered as usual, with three in **Lucas** 9 Jun (M. Anderson), one in **Wood** the 10th, and two at **Metzger** the 13th (K. Kaufman). The first returnee was at **Pipe Ck WA** 22 Jul (B. Whan), with inland birds the 31st in **Findlay** (J. Taber) and **Fostoria** (B. Hardesty).

Pectoral sandpiper: Unreported until 6 Jul, with six at **Hoover** (C. Bombaci); by the 14th, as many as 30 were at **PCWA** (C. Pierce).

Dunlin: Fourteen at **Metzger** 13 Jun were decidedly late (K. Kaufman). Unlike recent years, no summering dunlins were reported, but habitat was hard to find in the NW.

Stilt sandpiper: First noted were three in **Hardin** on 9 Jul (R. Counts). The high count was ~30 adults at **PCWA** 22 Jul (B. Whan). One at the **VOA** in **Butler** on 20 Jul was unusual (L. Brumbaugh).

Buff-breasted sandpiper: Quite early was one at **Hoover** 28 Jul (P. Gardner).

Short-billed dowitcher: The vanguard was one at **Camp Dennison** of all places, on 7 Jul (J. Brown), with ~20 the following day at **PCWA** (C. Caldwell), where by the 14th 100+ were present (C. Pierce) and ~150 on the 22nd (B. Whan). Two appeared down at **Burr Oak SP** in **Morgan** 27 Jul (G. Crippen).



This adult sanderling dropped down at Conneaut on 21 July. Photo by Gary Meszaros.

Wilson's snipe: Late enough to be a breeder was one at the *Hardin* wetland 2 Jun (R. Counts). M. Shieldcastle had one in *Erie* 7 Jun and another in *Sandusky* 6 Jun. G. Cottier reported a female with two chicks crossing a *Lucas* road 11 Jun. On schedule as a migrant was one at **KPWA** 28 Jul (P. Gardner).

Wilson's phalarope: A pair returned to the *Hardin* wetland 4 Jul (R. Counts), but limited access may have prevented full confirmation of repeated breeding. V. Smith reported a pair in the **Dillon SP** area 8 Jul.

Laughing gull: Alt adults were seen on a dock in *Erie* 3 Jun (R. Bobel), on **Kelleys Isl** 15 Jun (T. Bartlett), and at **Hoover Res** 28 Jul (P. Gardner).

Bonaparte's gull: June reports included some inland ones, such as two at **BCSP** the 5th (D. Overacker) and two at **GLSM** the 9th (T. Shively). C. Holt reported up to 10 summered at **Conneaut**, where the first adult showed up on 17 Jul. L. Gara had two at **Caesar Ck SP** 20 Jul.

Ring-billed gull: C. Holt reported the first juv at **Conneaut** on 27 Jun, with a noticeable influx of adults 17 Jul.

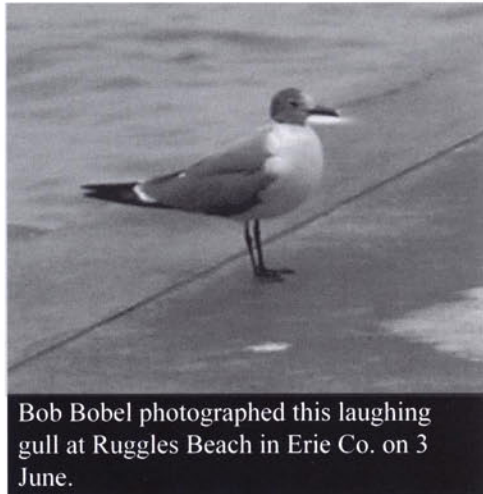
Herring gull: Inland summering birds were documented via 14 at **Caesar Ck SP** 18 Jun (L. Gara) and two in *Butler* 10 Jun (M. Busam); S. Albaugh had a pair in *Fairfield* 26 Jun. C. Holt reported the first juv at **Conneaut** on 26 Jul.

Lesser black-backed gull: D. Overacker reported an ad and a younger individual at **BCSP** on 15 Jul. The first North American nest of this species, resulting from coupling with a herring gull, was documented in **Maine** this year.

Caspian tern: Apparent non-breeders were one at **Conneaut** 27 Jun (C. Holt), and a surprising 8-10 at **Hoover** on 6 July (C. Bombaci). The first juv was at **Conneaut** 26 Jul (Holt).

Common tern: No doubt via the local assisted colony came counts of 70 on 3 Jun and 29 on 1 Jul at **Ottawa NWR** for the census team. One showed up at **Conneaut** 24 Jul (C. Holt). Holt commented that many summer reports of this species away from the NW breeding grounds may be worn Forster's, whose worn wingtips may appear dark.

Forster's tern: Not known as an Ohio breeder, Jun reports came on the 3rd (20 at **Metzger**, K. Kaufman), the 9th (two at **GLSM**, T. Shively), the 15th (two at **Kelleys Isl**, T. Bartlett), and the 27th (two at **Conneaut**, C. Holt), with small numbers there through July. Other July records inland included three alt birds at **Alum Ck SP** 1 Jul (R. Thorn) one at **Mosquito WA** the 10th (Holt), one at **Dillon SP** in *Muskingum* the 12th (Holt), two at **EFSP** the 14th (D. Morse), and one at **BCSP** the 15th (D. Overacker).



Bob Bobel photographed this laughing gull at Ruggles Beach in Erie Co. on 3 June.

Sanderling: Returned in the form of one at **Conneaut** 17 Jul, six there the 19th, and the high count of seven the 24th (all C. Holt). **Hoover Res** hosted three on 28 Jul (P. Gardner).

Semipalmated sandpiper: Numerous reports from Jun, the latest of two at **Metzger** the 13th (K. Kaufman). On schedule were returnees at **Hoover** (12 on 6 Jul, C. Bombaci), three at **Camp Dennison** the 11th (B. Foppe), with 100+ at **PCWA** by the 22nd (B. Whan).

Western sandpiper: Not often seen in Ohio, an alt adult lingered at **Metzger** as late as 13 Jun (K. Kaufman), and another returned at **BCSP** 15 Jul (D. Overacker). The first **Conneaut** report came from 19 Jul (C. Holt), with one at **Hoover** on the 27th (C. Bombaci).

Least sandpiper: Not absent for long, three were late at **Metzger** 13 Jun (K. Kaufman), and a pair touched down at **Conneaut** 27 Jun (C. Holt), with five inland in *Hardin* 4 Jul (R. Counts). Higher counts included 30-50 at **PCWA** 14 Jul (C. Pierce) and 40 at **Hoover** 21 Jul (J. Kuenzli).

White-rumped sandpiper: Lingered as usual, with three in *Lucas* 9 Jun (M. Anderson), one in *Wood* the 10th, and two at **Metzger** the 13th (K. Kaufman). The first returnee was at **Pipe Ck WA** 22 Jul (B. Whan), with inland birds the 31st in **Findlay** (J. Taber) and **Fostoria** (B. Hardesty).

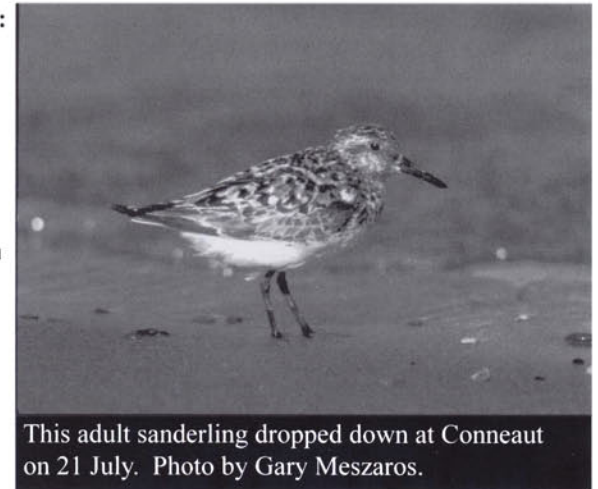
Pectoral sandpiper: Unreported until 6 Jul, with six at **Hoover** (C. Bombaci); by the 14th, as many as 30 were at **PCWA** (C. Pierce).

Dunlin: Fourteen at **Metzger** 13 Jun were decidedly late (K. Kaufman). Unlike recent years, no summering dunlins were reported, but habitat was hard to find in the NW.

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Bob Bobel photographed this laughing gull at Ruggles Beach in Erie Co. on 3 June.

Black tern: May have bred in the NW marshes, suggested by six seen 1 Jul by the ONWRC. Interesting were one in *Hancock* 5 Jun (*fide* B. Hardesty) and another over the **Muskingum River** in **Zanesville** 9 Jun (C. Holt). An imm was photographed 27 Jul on the beach at **BCSP** (R. Asamoto).

Eurasian collared-dove: This year finally marked the arrival in Ohio en masse of this invasive species from the other side of the globe. A pair was photographed in *Williams* this spring (R. Wolinski), then on 19 June C. Ploch discovered one in **Ft. Jefferson** in *Darke*, where a pair was soon found and photographed the following day (R. Schieltz, T. Shively); *fide* B. Glick, local observers said these birds had been noticed for the previous month or more. A pair was observed copulating in **W. Manchester** in *Preble* 26 Jun (T. Bartlett) farther south, remaining through at least 9 Jul (J. Fry). Shively reported one in **Bellefontaine**, **Logan** on 2 Jul. On 11 Jul B. Barchus reported a pair in **Celina** (*Mercer*), where 4-5 were found 17 Jul (Shively). Successful nesting has yet to be documented. Such a sudden appearance, involving multiple areas and copulating pairs, seems typical of this species; their appearance in force in Ohio is much delayed (they appeared in numbers in Alaska this spring), and may represent a backflow from the Indiana population.

Yellow-billed cuckoo: An excellent year by all accounts. G. Links said the species was unusually widespread and vocal in the **Oak Openings**, and D. Chasar that it had the best showing in the **CVNP** since the gypsy moth invasion of the late '90s. Reported in good numbers statewide.

Black-billed cuckoo: As always, with fewer reports than those for its cousin: for example the 15-24 Jun SCBC found eight black-billed cuckoos versus 61 yellow-billeds in **Summit**.



This Eurasian collared-dove was photographed 20 Jun in Darke Co. by Troy Shively.

Northern saw-whet owl: T. Bartlett (m obs) reported an adult on **Kelleys Isl** on 15 Jun, and 1-2 calling elsewhere on the island the following day, one possibly a young bird of the year. See article in this issue.

Common nighthawk: Many summer reports were disappointing as to numbers. In the NE, for example, the 15-24 Jun SCBC reported only 10 in **Summit**. D. Chasar found no nesting evidence in n. **Summit** and s. **Cuyahoga**. C. Holt found only one this summer, in **Mahoning** on 28 Jun.

Chuck-will's-widow: Under-reported as always. T. Bartlett reported 14+ heard 25-26 Jun in **Adams**. A bird sang in **Hocking** from 5 May through at least 30 Jun (P. Knoop *vide* J. Watts).

Red-headed woodpecker: An enigma. Many reporters judged their numbers down, but many others were finding them, admittedly in small numbers, in new areas.

Yellow-bellied sapsucker: Under-reported. A male and a juv were at **Holden Arboretum** in **Lake** 28 Jun (R. Thompson), and J. Pogacnik confirmed seven pairs, and had another nesting possible, in the **Lake** MPs during the season. G. Bennett found a singing male in **Ashtabula** 9 Jun, where A. Boone had possible local breeders 11 and 29 Jun, and P. Rodewald a drumming bird 22 Jun. J. Ross heard and saw one in **Lucas** 11 Jun.

Pileated woodpecker: Of local interest were two in the **Oak Openings** near Toledo 2 Jun (G. Links), one at **Loramie SP** in **Shelby** 9 Jun, and a pair at **Zane Caverns** in **Logan** 14 Jun (both T. Shively).

Olive-sided flycatcher: Typically late migrants were in **Paulding** 1 Jun (M&D Dunakin), at **Kelleys Isl** 2 Jun (T. Bartlett) and **LSR** 5 Jun (J. Pogacnik).

Acadian flycatcher: Well-represented in woods statewide; e.g., J. Watts tallied 13 at **Cantwell Cliffs** 18 Jun. One was in song as late as 15 Jul in **Delaware** (R. Thorn).

Alder flycatcher: Jun-Jul reports came from northern areas—from **Williams** in the west to **Ashtabula** in the east, and the tier of counties below, where in **Summit** however they were still outnumbered 90 to three by willows (SCBC). Further south, territorial birds were noticed in **Tuscarawas** (E. Schlabach, B. Glick), in **Logan** (T. Shively), in **Stark** (C. Holt), and in **Hocking** (C. Morrow, J. Watts).

Willow flycatcher: The ONWRC tallied 22 on the **Ottawa Refuge** 3 Jun for the high count.



Singing persistently on territory, but apparently without attracting a mate, was this male alder flycatcher near Ragersville in Tuscarawas Co. on 23 June. Photo courtesy of Bruce Glick.

Least flycatcher: Reckoned as doing well in the northern counties. J. Heflich found it "numerous" in **Ashtabula**, D. Chasar as having its "best...ever" year in the CVNP, and J. Pogacnik reported 11 probable or confirmed pairs in the **Lake** Metroparks. Three reports came from **Lucas**, and farther south, one from **Coshocton** 6 Jun-4 Jul (L. Deininger), and one at **Malabar Farms** in **Richland** on 9-13 Jun may have persisted for all we know (S. Snyder, G. Cowell). Most intriguing were two persistently singing males apparently on territory way down in **Meigs** 2 and 3 Jun (J. Duerr).

Great crested flycatcher: Seemingly doing well, with 12+ vocalizing at **John Bryan SP** in **Greene** on 25 Jun (G. Spahr), and 103 tallied in **Summit** for the 15-24 Jun SCBC.

Scissor-tailed flycatcher: An adult male was reported 8 Jun at **Lawrence Wds** in **Hardin**, and a young bird photographed in the **Oak Openings** on 15 Jul; documentations are with the OBRC.

White-eyed vireo: Generally less abundant in the north, they put on their best showing in the CVNP in years (D. Chasar).

Bell's vireo: Within recent memory, their population centered on **BCSP**, but succession made the habitat less welcoming there; then, **Hamilton** and **Butler** nestings dominated the news; last year Bell's were found in **Franklin**, **Darke**, **Hamilton**, **Greene**, and **Pickaway**, and this year B. Royce discovered 2007's second pair in **Pickaway** on 9 Jun, as many as three males were seen and heard in **Hilliard**, **Franklin** (B. McNulty, G. Stauffer) at a spot occupied by a pair in 2003, and R. Thorn found another in the county in **Grove City** on 19 Jun, while the OSU campus pair persisted into the summer.

Yellow-throated vireo: Another more southern vireo that D. Chasar reported as having had perhaps its best-ever numbers in the CVNP this season.

Blue-headed vireo: In its southernmost strongholds in **Hocking**, the first nest was verified at **CCMP** 14 May (J. Watts), and three singing males near **Cedar Falls** 9 Jun (S. Albaugh). R. Nirschl detected birds at **Kitty Todd NP** on 4 Jun and on 20 Jun in the **Oak Openings**, both in **Lucas**. D. Chasar proclaimed their numbers in the CVNP "very good," and J. Pogacnik reported 32 probable or confirmed nestings in the **Lake** MPs.

Red-eyed vireo: Almost 20 at **Magee** as late as 4 Jun surely were mostly migrants (K. Kaufman).



R. Nirschl alertly photographed this scissor-tailed flycatcher at the western end of the Toledo airport on 15 July.

Common raven: Thorough follow-up has yet to be done for brief sightings on 12 Jun of extremely wary ravens in an east-central county, indicating the possibility of breeding there (S. Albaugh).

Purple martin: Southbound migrants were passing 11 Jul at **Camp Dennison** in **Hamilton** (B. Foppe).

Bank swallow: Large aggregations included 300 at **BCSP** 8 Jul (D. Overacker) and 450 at **Conneaut** 24 Jul (C. Holt).

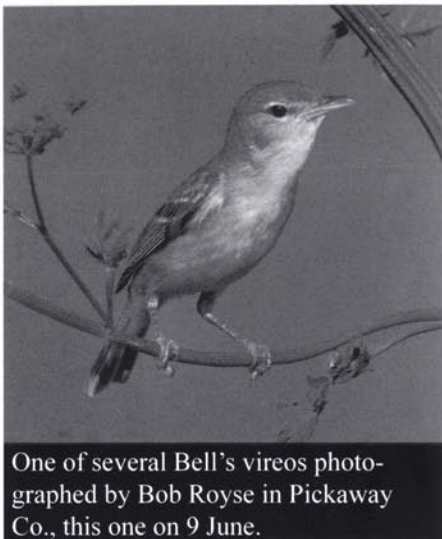
Cliff swallow: Interesting were four nests on a **Trumbull** storefront discovered by J. Hochadel on 30 Jun. This species nested far more commonly on occupied buildings long ago.

Red-breasted nuthatch: Summer birds included a pair through the period at a **Findlay** feeder (O. Line), one at **Mogadore Res** 1 Jun (K. Miller), a pair 9 Jun since spring at a **Fairfield** feeder (E. Reiner), one calling W of **Toledo** 14 Jun (J. Sawvel) and another on **Kelleys Isl** 15 Jun (T. Bartlett), one at **Beaver Ck WA** 18 Jun (A. Boone), one at **Mohican SP** 22 Jun (P. Rodewald), one in **Cuyahoga** 24 Jun (C. Caldwell), four or five in the **CVNP** 23&25 Jun, and one in **Sagamore Hills** 28 Jun (D. Chasar), a pair in the **Oak Openings** 2 Jul (M. Anderson), one SW of **Toledo** 14 Jul (C. Nilsson), and a female carrying food in **Trumbull** 15 Jul (C. Babyak). Premonitions of an invasion year perhaps.

Brown creeper: One in the **Oak Openings** 2 Jun (G. Links) was still singing 2 Jul (M. Anderson); another was in song in **Columbus** 13 Jun (R. Thorn), with yet another in **Greene** the 14th (T. Spahr) and two there on 25 Jun. One was in **Cuyahoga** 24 Jun (T. Martincic), one in **Richland** 20&29 Jun (G. Cowell), another in **Ashland** 22 Jun (P. Rodewald), and one in **Wayne** 20 May into June (J. Larson). A male in **Williams** 1 Jul may have been unmated (J. Grabmeier). D. Chasar declared them "doing well" in the **CVNP** as nesters, and J. Pogacnik had three probable nests in the **Lake** MPs during the summer.

Winter wren: Breeding was confirmed at one of two probable nesting sites in the **CVNP** (D&A Chasar), and territorial males found at sites in **Franklin** (C. Morrow) and **Hocking** (Morrow, J. Watts, S. Albaugh). J. Pogacnik reported 21 probable or confirmed nesters in the **Lake** MPs during the season.

Sedge wren: C. Hoagstrom reported numerous sedge wrens in SW **Hardin** fields through the period. Near **Killbuck** was one 1-6 Jun (S. Snyder). D. Hess found two territories in **Ross** 13 Jun. R. Asamoto had one in **Warren** 24 Jul, R. Kolde another at **Winton Wds** in **Hamilton** 27 Jul, and P. Gardner three at **KPWA** the following day. J. Pogacnik reported a pair in **Lake** during the period.



One of several Bell's vireos photographed by Bob Royse in Pickaway Co., this one on 9 June.

Marsh wren: As many as 16 males found **ONWR** to their liking 3 Jun (ONWRC) for the high count, with smaller numbers at healthier marshlands throughout.

Golden-crowned kinglet: In the **CVNP**, C. Caldwell found one in a spruce grove 2 Jun, while D&A Chasar found three territories at different locations there 23 Jun (ph). One in the **Oak Openings** 2 Jun (G. Links) grew to two the next day (M. Anderson). J. Pogacnik reported a probable pair in the **Lake** MPs for the period.

Veery: Well-represented in northern strongholds in **Lucas, Ashtabula, Williams, Geauga, Cuyahoga, Seneca, Summit,** and **Lake**, as well as **Hancock** and the southernmost populations in **Hocking**; a novelty was one singing in **Zane Caverns** in **Logan** 14 Jun (T. Shively).

Swainson's thrush: Tardy migrants were on the **ONWRC** 3 Jun, single birds at **LSR** 2 and 5 Jun (J. Pogacnik), and four at **Magee** 4 Jun (K. Kaufman).

Hermit thrush: In **Hocking**, four-five pairs at **CCMP**, seven heard singing at **Cantwell Cliffs** (J. Watts) and numerous pairs (S. Albaugh) near **Cedar Falls**, along with seven pairs in the **Lake** MPs (J. Pogacnik) were probable nesters. With the same status were pairs in **Richland** (G. Cowell, 2 Jun), the **CVNP** (6 Jun, D. Chasar), the **Oak Openings** (21 Jul, C. Anderson), and **Mohican SF** (22 Jun, P. Rodewald).

Northern mockingbird: E. Tramer reported their numbers down in the **NW**, most likely due to inclement weather in Feb and Apr.

Brown thrasher: J. Heflich reported the species is no longer common in **Ashtabula/Trumbull**.

Blue-winged warbler: E. Tramer reported a pair in the **Oak Openings** 17 Jul, where they are scarce.

Golden-winged warbler: Tantalizing, but not subsequently found, were a singer near **Ira Rd** in the **CVNP** 2 Jun (C. Caldwell) and one at **Dillon SP** on 26 May (V. Smith).

Tennessee warbler: A straggler passed through **Wadsworth** in **Medina** 1 Jun (R&S Harlan).

Nashville warbler: J. Heflich, P. Kellner, and J. Evans witnessed one at close range in **GRWA** on 15 Jul.



A nice find, but a shy photographic subject, was this golden-crowned kinglet near Horseshoe Pond in the **CVNP** 25 June. Photo by Dwight Chasar.

Northern parula: Well-reported, with finds in the northern counties: one singing in *Seneca* 1 Jun (N. Fensler), one or two in *Coshocton* 6 Jun-4 Jul (L. Deininger), four at **Lk Loramie SP** in *Shelby* 8 Jun (T. Shively), a singer in *Knox* 13 Jun (G. Cowell), another in *Fulton* 25 Jun (R. Schroeder), and one perhaps unmated in *Williams* 1 Jul (J. Grabmeier).

Yellow warbler: T. Bartlett reported capturing a male at **Kelleys Island** on 19 May that he had banded as an AHY bird on 17 May 1997, making this bird at least 11 years old. E. Schlabach called one in *Holmes* on 3 Jul his “earliest migrant ever” of the species.

Chestnut-sided warbler: Two nesting sites way down in *Scioto* this spring (B. Sparks), but other probable nests south of the range included one in *Knox* 8 Jun and another in *Jefferson* 12 Jun (S. Albaugh), in *Coshocton* 16 Jun-16 Jul (L. Deininger), in *Hocking* 12 Jun (C. Morrow), and a possible nester in *Vinton* (where confirmed in previous years) 23 Jul (B. Simpson).

Magnolia warbler: Latest passing north was one at **LSR** 5 Jun (J. Pogacnik). Probable breeders were three pairs in *Hocking* 16 Jun (J. Watts), one in *Lucas* 9 Jun (M. Anderson), and another at **Mohican SF** 22 Jun (P. Rodewald). Pogacnik reported 17 pairs probably nesting in the *Lake* MPs during the season. E. Schlabach found a puzzling singing male in *Tuscarawas* on 30 Jun that was not acting territorial otherwise.

Black-throated blue warbler: A first Jun record for *Paulding* was one in **Antwerp** on the 7th (M&D Dunakin).

Black-throated green warbler: Well-represented in traditional areas. Interesting were a singing male in the **Oak Openings** 6 Jun, then elsewhere in the area a female carrying food on the 27th (E. Tramer), a territorial male in *Fairfield* 7 Jul (D. McCoy), one in *Belmont* 12 Jun (B. Bond), and one 1-23 Jul in *Vinton* (B. Simpson). J. Pogacnik reported 31 pairs probable or confirmed as breeders in the *Lake* MPs during the period.

Blackburnian warbler: Confirmed as a breeder in **Mohican** 22 Jun (P. Rodewald). No reports came of the *Hocking* population this season.

Yellow-throated warbler: Farther north, this southern species was reported from *Lucas* on 29 Jun (M. Anderson), from *Shelby* on 8 Jun (T. Shively), from the **CVNP** on 2 Jul (ad and two fledglings, D. Chasar), and at least nine probable nesting pairs in the *Lake* MPs during the period (J. Pogacnik). Five males noted singing from pine stands on hills as far north as **Logan** 21 Jun (B. Whan).

Pine warbler: Another southern species. R&S Harlan reported six males from the **Nimisila Res** area in **Summit** on 4 Jun, and J. Pogacnik two probable nestings in the *Lake* MPs during the period. Reported from **Pymatuning SP** 9 Jun and *Portage* 20 Jun (G. Bennett) and the **CVNP** (D&A Chasar) on 25 Jun. Continues in the **Oak Openings**, but clearing of pine stands will reduce already small numbers (G. Links).

Bay-breasted warbler: K. Williams-Sieg observed a second-year female at **Tar**

Hollow SP in *Ross* on 26 Jun for a quite late inland record.

Blackpoll warbler: These fairly late warblers were widely reported during the first five days of Jun, but one singing on the 15th on **Kelleys Isl** was remarkable (T. Bartlett).

Cerulean warbler: Readily found in suitable habitat elsewhere, it is spottiest in the NW. J. Grabmeier found them “not uncommon around **Lake La Su An**” in *Williams*, and G. Links “rare but not unexpected” in the **Oak Openings** in *Lucas*, where T. Kemp found a nesting pair 3 Jun. A pair was near the **Zane Caverns** in *Logan* 14 Jun (T. Shively). J. Pogacnik reported 45 pairs probable or confirmed as nesters in the *Lake* MPs.

Black-and-white warbler: A commoner nester in the south, breeding was confirmed in *Erie* 7 Jul (G. Fowler), in *Columbiana* 23 Jun (J. Dolan), and probable (two) near **Blackhand Gorge** in *Licking* 7 Jun (S. Albaugh). Out-of-the-way reports came from **Lk Loramie** in *Shelby* (T. Shively, 9 Jun) and **Kelleys Isl**, where two males were singing 15 Jun (T. Bartlett). Nesters are rare in *Hamilton*, but a pair was monitored there throughout July (K. Westendorf, E. Burkholder).

American redstart: Last probable migrants were six at **Magee** on 4 Jun (K. Kaufman). A widespread breeder, but lesser-known locations were **Lk Loramie** in *Shelby* (two birds on 8 Jun) and 10 at **Zane Caverns** in *Logan* (T. Shively), and at **Kelleys Isl** a robust 12 on 16 Jun (T. Bartlett). Scarce in *Hamilton*, but one was present 24 Jun (N. Keller).

Prothonotary warbler: C. Bombaci reported 176 territories at **Hoover Res**, where fledglings were present as late as 24 Jul. In (relatively) outlying areas, T. Kemp reported one in *Wood* 10 Jun, and E. Schlabach three fledglings in *Tuscarawas* on 7 Jul. J. Grabmeier reported several from *Williams* in Jun, and G. Bennett another from the far corner of the state in *Ashtabula* 9 Jun. Jay Stenger reported confirmed nesting in *Hamilton* 3 Jun, and its recorded distribution as a breeding species seems to be expanding.

Worm-eating warbler: Largely a breeder in the SE, and so largely reported, though P. Rodewald reported one in **Mohican** 22 Jun, B. Osborne located one for the SCBC on 24 Jun in **Summit**, in *Hamilton* P. Wharton had one at **MWW** on 3 Jun, and *fide* M. Busam one was at **Gilmore Ponds** in *Butler* 14 Jul.

Northern waterthrush: Unusual was one netted in a banding operation in *Vinton* 26 Jul (B. Placier), as was one banded at **Springville Marsh** 16 Jul and another on **Kelleys Isl** a few days later (T. Bartlett). J. Pogacnik had one



Confirmed as nesting by carrying food, this prairie warbler was unfortunately feeding a cowbird. Photographed 28 July at Caesar Creek SP by Rick Asamoto.

confirmed and one probable nester in the *Lake* MPs during the period.

Louisiana waterthrush: Discoveries in the west included two in *Logan* 11 Jun (T. Shively), one in *Delaware* 15 Jun (J. Davis) and several elsewhere in the county through the month by C. Bombaci. In the SW, reports came from *Hamilton, Clermont, Brown, and Adams*.

Kentucky warbler: Beyond its general range were one in the *CVNP* 2 Jun (D. Chasar) and another in *Wood* 10 Jun (T. Kemp), and 16 Jun in *Champaign* and 17 Jun in *Shelby* (T. Shively). B. Lund reported a possible Kentucky X hooded warbler hybrid in *Adams*; a description and audio tape were provided to the Borror Laboratory of Bioacoustics at OSU.

Mourning warbler: Lagging migrants persisted as late as 2 Jun in *Fairfield* (J. Watts) and 4 Jun in *Lucas* (E. Tramer). J. Pogacnik reported three probable nesting pairs in the *Lake* MPs during the period. B. Townsend confirmed nesting in NE *Geauga* 23 Jun.

Common yellowthroat: Two observers reported a “broken-wing” distraction display by this common species during the period.

Hooded warbler: In the western counties where the species is sparse, a male was in *Logan* 14 Jun (T. Shively), and a possible nest was in *Hancock* during the period (S. Baxter *vide* B. Hardesty).

Wilson’s warbler: The latest straggler was at *MWW* on 6 Jun (F. Frick).

Canada warbler: Several pairs nested at *CCMP* in *Hocking* (J. Watts). J. Pogacnik reported 10 pairs probable or confirmed as breeders in the *Lake* MPs during the period.

Yellow-breasted chat: Its numbers and distribution seemed little changed statewide, and seemed healthy in its strongholds. Its taxonomic future remains under scrutiny.

Summer tanager: Scantly reported as always. One at *Lake Loramie* in *Shelby* 9 Jun was of interest (T. Shively). Observers of the Mississippi kite in *Hocking* reported one nearby, such as B. Glick on 29 Jun. Inexplicably scarce in the *CCMP*, one found this season there 4 Jun (A. Boone) was news.

Scarlet tanager: D. Brinkman reported a bird in *Cincinnati* on 23 Jun with a pale yellow head, and white breast and belly, an odd pattern for a molting bird.

Field sparrow: Twenty-two showed up for the 1 Jul ONWRC.



This male from C. Bombaci’s prothonotary warbler project regarded the new Hoover Reservoir boardwalk as within his territory. Photo by Virginia Vandermeer on 28 June.

Vesper sparrow: This species seems findable with persistence in otherwise unpromising habitat of agricultural fields, and it may be more numerous than many believe.

Lark sparrow: Nested in customary numbers at the usual **Oak Openings** sites. On 27 Jun, F. Frick found a pair with one young in a disturbed weedy area just NW of *Cincinnati*; other observers were later able to confirm two breeding pairs. On 23 Jul, P. North detected a pair in a waste area frequented by off-road vehicles south of *Columbus*, with a likely juvenal bird seen later by several. E. Schlabach reported the following in w. *Tuscarawas* in the area where blue grosbeaks were reported: an ad 14 Jul, then on 17 Jul two ad with three juveniles. The breeding pair in an old quarry site in *Greene* for the second straight year in late May was apparently not reported during the summer period.

Savannah sparrow: In the *Hardin* wetland, R. Counts had 21 on both 2 Jun and 4 Jul, on the latter date including many young. The old Coliseum site in the *CVNP* in *Summit* produced 10 on 24 Jun (C. Caldwell).

Grasshopper sparrow: The high count was ~100 in a field near *Deer Ck WA* 18 Jun; the field was mowed 4 Jul by public land managers (R. Royse). In the *Hardin* wetland, R. Counts had 29 on 2 Jun and 18 on 4 Jul. Scarce in the far NE, where J. Pogacnik reported probable nesting near *Painesville*.

Henslow’s sparrow: Atlas work has demonstrated this species is more widespread than formerly thought. Its narrow but not particularly scarce habitat requirements and inconspicuous vocalizations may in part explain this. Numerous spots have been located in northern and western areas where it was once thought rare or even absent.

Swamp sparrow: Well reported in strongholds the northern half of the state. Farther south, reported as a probable breeder in *Fairfield* 20 May (*vide* M. Shieldcastle), with a report of possible nesting in *Gallia* 10 Jun (B. Sparks).

White-throated sparrow: The latest reported migrant was at *Maghee* on 4 Jun (K. Kaufman). Strangely, a couple of local reports of birds heard during the second half of June were followed by a closely-observed individual in Embshoff Wds in *Cincinnati* on 7 Jul (B. Zimmerman) for an extraordinary record from a southern location.

White-crowned sparrow: Last seen was a migrant in *Toledo* 3 Jun (S. Nirschl).

Dark-eyed junco: Breeding was confirmed in *Summit* and *Cuyahoga* (D&A Chasar), likely in *Trumbull* (E. Kistler) and *Geauga* (T. Martincic). In the undisputed stronghold of the state, the *Lake* MPs, J. Pogacnik reported 103 nesting pairs either probable or confirmed during the period, all in hemlock bluff habitat.

Rose-breasted grosbeak: Echoing spring abundances—or perhaps more accurately necessary changes in food sources—summer reports at feeders abounded. J. Heflich called them “especially common” in *Ashtabula/Trumbull*, and observers reported them during the nesting season from the south in *Clermont, Hamilton, and Montgomery*.

Blue grosbeak: Reports of this species exploded this summer. They are too numerous to expound in detail, and readers are advised to revise the range map for the first Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas to include the following counties with records from this summer alone: *Lucas, Richland, Jefferson, Fayette, Clark, Monroe, Meigs, Gallia, Lawrence, Ross, Coshocton, Montgomery, Shelby, Champaign, Logan, Adams, Pickaway, Franklin, Athens, Clermont, Hamilton, Tuscarawas, Scioto, and Butler*. Despite increased numbers due to the OBBA's improved coverage, and increasing knowledge of its habitats, this species still seems to be on the increase in Ohio.

Dickcissel: Not a major invasion year, but better coverage by the Atlasing project made their incursions into the western counties evident. Counties with records included *Putnam, Wood, Hancock, Sandusky, Hardin, Wyandot, Marion, Richland, Ashland, Darke, Auglaize, Shelby, Miami, Logan, Champaign, Franklin, Morrow, Clark, Fayette, Pickaway, Butler, Hamilton, Highland, Adams, Ross, and Lawrence*.

Bobolink: Multiple reports came from *Hardin, Summit, Butler, Wood, Ashtabula, Williams, Lucas, Lake, Hancock, Seneca, Lorain, Medina, Cuyahoga, Portage, Trumbull, Richland, Ashland, Licking, Guernsey, Jefferson, Warren, Clark, Fayette, Noble, Pickaway, Knox, Holmes, Mahoning, Carroll, Logan, Champaign, Union, Delaware, Morrow, and Franklin*.

Eastern meadowlark: Down, but persists at grasslands. The old Coliseum site in the CVNP held 20+ 24 Jun (C. Caldwell). The VOA site in *Butler* held as many 2 Jun (M. Busam). Less pruned than usual, the west end of the **Toledo airport** had at least seven territories this summer (E. Tramer).

Western meadowlark: The lovelorn bird seen since March in *Wood* was not observed to have attracted a female by 1 Jul (R. Nirschl). Nirschl found another in *Williams* on 1 Jul. Perhaps the OBBA will produce a clearer picture of its summer abundance in the state.

Yellow-headed blackbird: J. Moore documented one at a feeder in *Highland* on 1 May. Outside of the NW marshes, this species may appear as a rarity anywhere in the state, usually noticed at feeders.

Purple finch: During June, reported were possible or probable breeders in *Medina, Ashtabula, Summit, Portage, Trumbull, Richland, Ashland, Mahoning, Columbiana, Tuscarawas, Lake, and Jefferson*.

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Further Afield

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[An earlier version of this column appeared in *The Ohio Cardinal* 27(2), otherwise known as the Winter 2003-04 issue. Much has changed on the Ohio birding scene since then, and knowing that many new subscribers have recently come aboard, it seems a good time to bring everyone up to date. In the account that follows, some of the names have been changed; the message, however, remains the same.]

Maybe you've wandered the same wistful trail. I've visited South Carolina's I'on Swamp, if only out of tribute. Scared up plenty of turkey hunters, but no Bachman's warblers. I've visited the sandy pastures of western Galveston Island, Texas, if only out of tribute. Saw wads of whimbrels and scads of cattle, but no Eskimo curlews. I've visited Bayou de View in Arkansas, Louisiana's Honey Island Swamp, and South Carolina's Congaree Swamp, if only out of tribute. Saw a pile of pileateds, but the ivory-billed elegantly eluded me. I've even made a pilgrimage to the Passenger Pigeon Memorial at the Cincinnati Zoo, and doffed my cap to Martha, the last of her kind, who lived in captivity all her life until succumbing at the Zoo in 1914. Doffed likewise at the plaque for Lady Jane and Incas, the world's last known pair of Carolina parakeets, who died at the same zoo in 1917 and 1918. I visited these sites—dreamily, I'll admit, but pragmatically expecting nothing-- and saw exactly what I expected to see.

Sometimes it's altogether too easy to forget *why* you do what you do. As a former editor of *The Ohio Cardinal*, as a former Ohio compiler for *North American Birds* magazine, and as a multi-term member of the Ohio Bird Records Committee (OBRC), it has been (in part) my responsibility and privilege over the past 20+ years to monitor Ohio's birding records. It is a commitment and a challenge that I take very seriously—this gate-keeper's role. Truthfully, though, the task can seem endless, monotonous, and thankless. The financial rewards are nonexistent, or more precisely, negative. And frankly, the entire exercise can grow somewhat numbing—processing years of good birds into mere statistics. But then I think back on Bayou de View, or Galveston Island, or I'on Swamp, and immediately my focus sharpens, and my duty becomes all too clear.

Of course, bird populations and movements are never static, and their fluctuations always demand careful scrutiny. But for the most part, these movements are comfortably predictable, ebbing and flowing at about the same time, year after year, and in roughly the same numbers, given similar conditions. Various populations trend upward or downward, but usually they do so quite slowly. Sudden catastrophes such as the ravages of West Nile virus are a shock to the system. But the evanescence of slow, almost imperceptible change is particularly pernicious. This sort of metamorphosis does not descend upon us in a blinding flash—rather, it melts away our birds, slowly but surely, right before

our eyes. So slowly that we may not even notice that it's happening, until it's too late.

And so, we must monitor *all* of our birds, whether they be migrants or residents, nesters or winterers, game or non-game, or just a few hopelessly anomalous vagrants, desperate and lonely a long way from home. We monitor our birds wherever they may occur in the state, and whenever. It is gratifying to think that birds can benefit from our efforts-- whether they dine at our feeders, or raise their young in a preserve that our donations helped to acquire. Even if we are unable to experience them personally, birds somehow give us pleasure wherever they may be. It's a good thing just to know that they are out there, running their birdy errands as best as they can. But it's a better thing to know that we are helping their cause in every way we can. We owe them more than our feeders, our dollars, and our refuges-- we owe them our *attention*. Diligent attention.

A noble idea-- but where to begin? Formally reporting one's bird observations may not seem especially glamorous, but it's always a worthwhile exercise, and one open to all contributors regardless of background. Our records, when distilled, help to establish our current understanding of bird abundance and distribution, while simultaneously serving as benchmarks for future research. Every season, many widely scattered observers collectively take a snapshot of each species' ups and downs, and uniformities, enabling us to preserve this image when the results are published in the permanent, printed historical record. This is the seasonal summary you'll find in every issue of the *Cardinal*; for three decades now, this summary has served as a fundamental *raison d'être*.

Although I'm sure many would disagree, I feel that the permanent preservation of the historical record on the printed page is inherently more desirable than preservation electronically. Online, the long-term availability of web pages and web sites is always a concern; also, text and graphics can be altered without any acknowledgement that such has taken place. It can also sometimes be hard to avoid a casual, ephemeral "anything goes" attitude on the Web; while this can be beneficial in many circumstances, breeziness does not serve the historical record, our benchmark for future researchers, especially well. Print media, however, are no match for electronic media when it comes to ease of storage and the ability to manipulate virtually unlimited amounts of data. Even so, my gut tells me to "get it on paper" whenever feasible. Call me old-fashioned. And a bit stubborn.

So what do compilers, editors, and record keepers expect in the reports they receive? Although there are several different layers of reporting opportunities available (local, state, regional, national, and international in scope), all compilers desire each record to include at least these five basic bits of information: the species, the number of individuals observed, the date of the observation, the site of the observation, and the name of the observer. Any other information, such as the age and plumage of the bird, corroborating observers, etc., is also welcomed. Photographs are always desirable, especially for verification of rarities, but even then photos are not a requirement. Compilers have an easier job when contributors submit their reports in the current American Ornithologists' Union checklist order; although helpful, this is not essential.

For printed media, space is always at a premium, and editors have

choices to make. Compilers simply cannot print everything that is reported to them, and they must carefully choose what they publish based on many factors, of which relative rarity is only one. Rarity can take many forms—a species can be rare throughout the year, or perhaps be unusual only in a portion of the state, or only at a particular time of year. Also, compilers typically seek records of unusually high or low numbers of individuals for a given site or date. All of these factors, and many more, must be considered when making each print/don't print decision. It's also necessary to keep in mind that the likelihood of any particular record being printed diminishes as the geographic scale of the publication grows wider; as the area grows, so does the number of records competing against each other, with only the most noteworthy records acquiring the limited (and valuable) publication space.

As relatively permanent documents, print publications bear the responsibility of serving as the historical record—and therefore they must provide the type of information that future researchers might need to make educated assessments in their day. With this responsibility, editors of print journals occasionally (and understandably) request or require reassurances regarding unusual records. For the rarest of rarities, the OBRC should be involved.

Briefly, the Ohio Bird Records Committee functions as a peer-review panel of experienced Ohio birders, and has served as the *de facto* “court of last resort” for Ohio avian rarities since its inception in 1991. As such, it maintains the official Ohio state bird list. Its individual members evaluate records to the best of their abilities, and collectively the Committee endorses the records it deems reliable for placement in the historical record. The Committee examines records of species that appear on its Review List (<http://www.ohiobirds.org/records/reviewlist.php>); these are all notably rare species, whose presence in Ohio should always be substantiated with formal written documentation and supported with photos or sound recordings whenever possible. Although OBRC documentation forms are quite useful, especially in suggesting the type of information that Committee members might find beneficial, they are certainly not mandatory. Check one out for yourself at <http://www.ohiobirds.org/records/docform.pdf>. OBRC secretary Tom Kemp (1507 Napoleon Road, Bowling Green, OH 43402, or e-mail at andigena@aol.com) is your man on the scene here; you may contact him directly with your questions and documentations, or you may also reach the Committee via *Ohio Cardinal* editor Bill Whan (you can find his addresses inside the front cover of every issue). Since its formation, over 40 Ohioans have served terms of office in this mostly anonymous job. No ivory towers, political fiefdoms, or deep science here, just fellow birders trying to do their part-- fellow birders who appreciate your support.

Potential reporters are well served to familiarize themselves with their local, and if possible, statewide birdlife before submitting a report. Record keepers are more likely to accept an observation of a rarity when the observer's overall report indicates a familiarity with what is normally to be expected in their area. For instance, a report of an out-of-range Carolina Chickadee in the Oak Openings with no additional comment may be nothing more than a typo, but it may also indicate a lack of familiarity with chickadee ranges in Ohio. If this hypothetical observer was indeed unfamiliar with Ohio chickadee ranges, then it seems very likely that he or she did not make the necessary effort to distinguish between the purported Carolina and the vastly more likely Black-

capped Chickadee. Whenever an observer provides a well-rounded seasonal report, including sightings of expected species alongside any rarities, compilers gain a better grasp of the observer's experience. Compilers appreciate observers who conscientiously acknowledge a *lack* of experience. Always be conservative when submitting a report; if in doubt, leave it out. Our responsibility as reporters and as compilers is to provide the most trustworthy and accurate record for future researchers.

Any good faith exchange of information is always appreciated and worth the effort, regardless of whether any particular record ultimately sees publication. For instance, I once received a report of a pterodactyl. Really. Doubting that this report was made in good faith, I chose not to publish it. It's true that I may have buried the scientific breakthrough of the year, but I still have a high degree of confidence in my decision. Besides, a pterodactyl isn't even a bird.

As mentioned earlier, there are several different layers of reporting opportunities available for print publications. The first reporting opportunity is the local level. In the northeastern quadrant of Ohio, for instance, there are two excellent local print journals, each covering a different group of counties. The stately *Cleveland Bird Calendar* has dutifully recorded changes in bird populations there since 1905. In this tradition, I'm sure editor Fred Dinkelbach (6320 Greenwood Parkway, Apt. 406, Sagamore Hills, OH 44067, or e-mail at seasonalreports@kirtlandbirdclub.org) would appreciate any reports you can offer from the Cleveland region. Just to the south of the *Bird Calendar's* area, *The Bobolink* has covered the birds of east-central Ohio since 1997 in a scholarly yet entertaining fashion. Although the *Bobolink's* editors change seasonally, Su Snyder has offered to see that your reports reach the proper desk. You can reach Su at 1120 Hudson Drive, Wooster, OH 44691, or e-mail her at bird348@sssnet.com.

The next layer of reporting is the statewide layer. In Ohio, the seasonal reports in *The Ohio Cardinal* have filled that role for the past 30 years. For nearly 10 years of that span, editor Bill Whan has done yeoman's duty as compiler and author of the seasonal reports. He may be uncomfortable in printing these accolades about himself, but let's see if he leaves them in; they are well-deserved, and his efforts should be much appreciated by all. His postal and e-mail addresses appear on the inside cover of every issue of this journal, but here they are again: Bill Whan, 223 E. Tulane Rd., Columbus, OH 43202; e-mail billwhan@columbus.rr.com.

If by chance you don't usually read through the seasonal reports section of the *Cardinal*, take a glance at the report in this issue. If you find yourself carefully scanning through it for records that you had submitted, then you've already done your job. But if you find yourself thinking, “Hey, I had way more Green-winged Teal than what this dope lists as the high count,” or “Here it says that Least Bitterns were reported in six counties, but this chump doesn't even mention the bird in Medina County that every single person on our field trip saw this past May,” then chances are those reports weren't submitted at all. If you find that you can improve upon the published accounts, it has now become your job to do just that. Don't assume someone else will report, even if the birds you saw were also seen by others, or were seen at a frequently-birded location, such as the Magee Marsh Bird Trail. It's so easy *not* to report. Most birders don't. Everyone should. Did you feel that? That is called responsibility, and it has just

fallen on you.

On a regional and national scale, *North American Birds* magazine, once published by the National Audubon Society, but now overseen by the American Birding Association, is the quarterly journal of record. The United States is broken down into a variety of regions, based on political and physiographic boundaries. All of Ohio now falls in the unfortunately-named "Eastern Highlands and Upper Ohio River Valley Region," along with all of Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Up until a few years ago, Ohio was divided between the "Middlewestern Prairie Region" and the "Appalachian Region," but now we are all cozied up in a single region. One of the Regional Editors for our region is none other than Victor W. Fazio, III. I suspect Vic would be happy with any reports you can provide him (hold the pterodactyls, please). His address is 18722 Newell St., Floor 2, Shaker Hts., OH 44122; e-mail at bcvireo@sbcglobal.net. Based on information gleaned from throughout the region, *NAB* editors then choose the "noteworthy" of the noteworthy, and prepare their report for publication. Given space constraints and the three-state-wide reporting area, seeing your records published in *North American Birds* certainly qualifies as a red-letter day.

Don't overlook other Ohio-based reporting options. The Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas II (<http://www.ohiobirds.org/obba2/>), which is already heading into its third year of data collection, covers the entire state and could certainly use your help. It has produced many fascinating rarity reports, all the while reinforcing our understanding of our expected nesters. But if birding in the summer doesn't appeal, then perhaps the Ohio Winter Bird Atlas (http://www.bsbo.org/winter_bird_atlas/winter_bird_atlas.htm) might be a good way to combat the winter blahs.

Several informal online reporting options are also available. For observations anywhere in Ohio, your first reporting stop will probably be the *ohio-birds Email List*, sponsored by the Ohio Ornithological Society, at <http://www.ohiobirds.org/publications/emallist.php>. In southwestern Ohio, you might wish to contribute to Ned Keller's *Cincinnati Bird Sightings Log* at <http://www.cincinnatibirds.com/goodbird/sighting/php>. In northwestern Ohio, you should consider the Toledo Area Rare Bird Alert at http://www.rarebird.org/forum/forum_topics.asp?FID=1. Keep in mind that these informal online reporting options are essentially unedited; the information they proffer, while timely and usually helpful, should be considered transient and tentative rather than a part of the permanent historical record. If you report to electronic mailing lists or forums, such as the above, *don't stop there*. Also be sure to send a report to the appropriate print publications. This will help guarantee that your reports are formally evaluated by experienced compilers.

It's a nifty thing to see your name in black and white, credited with an unusual bird sighting. But reporting solely in hopes of seeing your name in print misses the point. I used to think that I had won a small victory whenever one of my sightings was printed. After considering the woodpecker, the curlew, the pigeon, and the rest, I now believe that the mere act of submitting a report is a small victory in itself, one worth repeating season after season. But the victories don't belong to us-- they belong to our birds, and to our future. However you choose to contribute— whether by submitting a detailed bird-by-bird seasonal report, or a filled-in checklist, or one bird at a time-- do it well, and do it now.

A Fall Migration Study of Northern Saw-whet Owls in Ross County, Ohio: Preliminary Results and Historical Perspective

by Kelly Williams-Sieg

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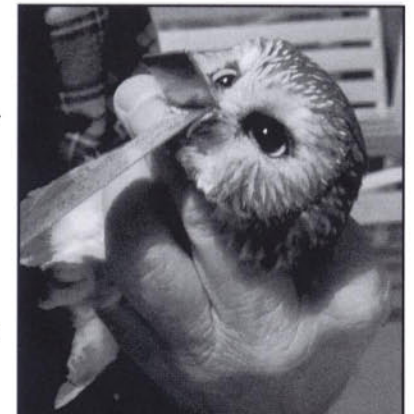
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Northern saw-whet owls *Aegolius acadicus* are tiny denizens of our northern forests. Cannings (1993) reports that breeding birds reach highest densities in coniferous forests, though they use many woodlands and may be found in mixed forests with a well-developed mid-canopy. Starting in April, females lay five to six eggs in cavities. Natural cavities, including those excavated by woodpeckers, mainly northern flickers *Colaptes auratus* and pileated woodpeckers *Dryocopus pileatus*, are used, as are nest boxes. The male provides food, predominantly woodland mice *Peromyscus* sp. for the female and the nestlings until the female leaves the fledged young in the male's care (Cannings 1993).

While there are published reports of nesting in 24 Ohio counties, Peterjohn (2001) observes that most reports of summering birds date from before 1940. Wheaton (1882) claimed they were "not uncommon residents" in northern Ohio and were resident or winter visitors in other parts of the state. In northern Ohio, some regarded them as more abundant than the eastern screech-owl *Megascops asio*, whose color morphs were then referred to as red and mottled owls (Read 1853). Since 1940, there have been reports of nesting attempts in 1946, 1964, 1982, and 1995 in Lake and Cuyahoga counties and in Toledo in 1966 (Peterjohn 2001). By contrast, the ongoing second Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas has to date documented one observed, 66 possible, 137 probable, and six confirmed nesting attempts.

Taverner and Swales (1911) reported that the northern saw-whet, or Acadian owl as it was called at the time, was regarded as a resident on its breeding grounds by Wilson (1814) and later by Coues (1874), and as an "irregular wanderer" in fall and winter by Fisher (1893). However, Swales had found the remains of two saw-whets on Point Pelee in October 1908, where it had previously not been documented, and reported that Saunders found the result of other depredations upon this species in the same location. In October of 1910, 12 saw-whets were found at the Point in thickets of eastern redcedar *Juniperus virginiana*, and they concluded that long-eared owls *Asio otus*, present in numbers and hunting the same thickets, were responsible for the depredations. Taverner and Swales also describe a report from a fishing-boat captain aboard the steamer Helena on Lake Huron on 10 October 1903 that reported "a large migration of small owls," many of which alit upon the vessel.

W.E. Saunders (1907) gives a haunting description of a snowstorm on 10 October 1906 that dumped over a foot of snow near the southeast corner of



A variety of measurements are recorded for each owl captured at Buzzard's Roost including bill length (Photo by Kelly Williams-Sieg).

Lake Huron. On 18 October, hundreds of birds were found dead along the shore of Lake Huron by Newton Tripp, who reported the disaster to Saunders. Saunders arrived on 21 October and counted 1,845 dead birds of 26 species along a two-mile stretch of beach in only two to three hours. Among the dead were 24 saw-whet owls. "The saw-whets were a surprise. They are rare in western Ontario, and one sees them only at intervals of many years. Evidently they migrate in considerable numbers."

A hundred years later, we still have questions about the movements of this secretive owl. We know that each year a portion of the population migrates south to spend the winter, yet the southern limits of the migration are not well defined, and appear to vary from year to year. Some years, mass movements are recorded. During the fall of 1995, five mid-Atlantic banding stations captured 2,596 saw-whets, while during the previous four years fewer than 200 owls had been caught each fall (Brinker, 1997). Audio lures were not used at most migration stations prior to 1989, so comparisons to other years are more difficult, but based on banding data it appears that larger than usual flights occurred in the east in 1965, 1980, and 1981 (Brinker 1997).

Project OwlNet was created to facilitate and coordinate the monitoring of owl populations and now includes over 160 members with over 50 stations in the US and Canada. Licensed bird banders set up mist nets, usually 12 m long by 3 m high with a mesh size of 60 mm, placing an audio lure comprised of the male "toot" call in the center of a net array to attract saw-whets into the area. Many east coast stations have operated in this way for a number of years and are starting to shed light on the movements of saw-whets.

In the past, fall migration of saw-whets in Ohio has not been not well described, but was thought to occur October through November. Peterjohn (2001) regarded the species as "casual to rare" near Lake Erie and "accidental to locally rare" in the rest of the state during fall. On a regional scale, Cannings (1993) cites a study by Holroyd and Woods (1975) that suggests two main migration routes in the east: one from central Ontario through the Ohio River valley to Kentucky and the other along the Atlantic coast from Nova Scotia to North Carolina. Brinker (1997) and Cannings (1993) cite examples of owls originally banded in Ontario, Wisconsin, and Minnesota that were recaptured at east coast banding stations.

Stahler et al. (1991) banded 21 saw-whet owls during a raptor survey at Killdeer Plains Wildlife area in Wyandot County, with 14 banded between 24 November and 9 December 1990. Several of these owls were recaptured from January to March, along with an additional seven owls banded. Randle and Austing (1952) found 15 saw-whet owls in upland habitat during the winter of 1949-50 near Cincinnati. Owls were found roosting most often between eight and 10 feet high in red pine *Pinus resinosa* and Scotch pine *Pinus sylvestris*, though two were found in honeysuckle *Lonicera japonica* tangles.

In late October 2003, I returned from an exhilarating week of training at the Powdermill banding station in Pennsylvania, where I saw my first saw-whet owl. I was enthralled, and full of questions about this species. If some reportedly overwinter in the southern coniferous forest and have been found in Ohio before, why wouldn't they use the habitat at Buzzard's Roost in Ohio's Ross County along their way? I convinced our banding team--which consists of morning people--to set up nets in the evening and stay out at night because I had to see if saw-whets occurred here and felt they had to see a saw-whet for themselves. No owls were caught on our first night, but our group was willing to humor me for one more. That night we caught a tiny owl that captured our hearts, and curiosity that has kept us coming back to spend the cool fall evenings in the woods.

We set up on only six nights that November, but we captured seven saw-whet owls, including one on 21 November that had been banded 5 November 2003 at Holiday Beach, Ontario (Sieg, 2003). We then joined Project OwlNet and started preparations to establish a fall migration monitoring station at Buzzard's Roost Nature Preserve. The migration station is a volunteer-run project with three licensed bird-banders and several other volunteers who patrol nets for a minimum of four hours after dark up to six nights a week from approximately 10 October to 10 December. Two net runs are used. One run consists of five mist nets and the other of four nets, all placed in series through second-growth woods with a dense understory near small field openings. An audio lure is placed in the middle of each run, with speakers facing in opposite directions to maximize the distance from which the call can be heard. Saw-whets are preyed on by larger owls, and are unlikely to be found in open woods used by great horned owls *Bubo virginianus* (R. Austing, pers. comm.). Placing nets in thicker cover improves the likelihood of finding these owls, and better ensures their safety.

In 2004, we spent 23 nights from 16 October to 9 December in the woods. The first owl of the season was captured on 17 October. Forty-five saw-whets were captured, with a capture rate of 0.23 owls per net-hour. A second-year female (a bird hatched the previous year) that had been banded on 6 April 2004 at the Straits of Mackinac in Michigan was netted at our station on 25 October. On 13 November, we recaptured a second-year female originally banded approximately 600 miles to our north on 22 September near New Liskeard, Ontario. An after-second-year female (at least in its third fall) banded on 3 December at Buzzard's Roost was recaptured two miles away on 17 March 2005 during periodic winter monitoring.

After capturing an owl in the nets, banders and trained volunteers carefully remove them and place them in a bag to keep them calm during our walk up the hill to our banding lab. Each is banded with a 4-short band specially developed to accommodate the saw-whet's small size. We check the overall condition of each bird and take a variety of measurements. We are able to age most owls by looking at the wing feathers, as the sequence of replacement of these feathers varies with age. Females are generally larger than males, and sex is assigned based on wing length and mass (Brinker 1997); however 18.5% of the 113 owls captured at Buzzard's Roost from 2003-2006 were not assigned to sex because the measurements fell in the overlap range.

Before releasing the owls, we place them back in a bag in a dark room to allow their eyes to adjust. One evening, I was in a hurry to get back down to the nets so I placed the owl I had just finished examining on my arm as I walked. The owl sat there calmly, looking from the dark woods to me, allowing me to carry it most of the way down the hill before giving me one last look and flying silently off into the night.

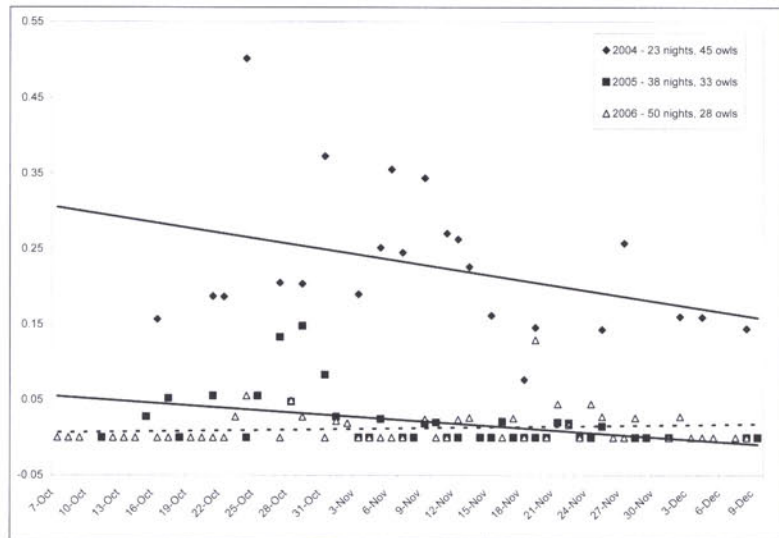
Monitoring in 2005 occurred on 38 nights from 12 October to 10 December with the first owl captured on 16 October. Thirty-three owls were captured, two of which had been previously banded. An after-second-year female recaptured on 29 October had originally been banded near Bittinger, Maryland as a hatch-year (first fall) on 4 November 2003. On 1 November, an after-second-year female was recaptured, originally banded at the Straits of Mackinac, Michigan on 9 April 2004. Six owls banded at our station in 2005 were recaptured, and had a mean stopover of 12.2 nights with the longest known stopover of 31 days.

Owls were heard vocalizing on 16 of 24 nights in November 2005 from perches near our net lanes and sometimes in flight around the study area. The saw-whets make a variety of chirps, twitters, and screams in addition to the advertising toot call in the vicinity of our banding operation. We think the owls

that vocalize near the nets may have already been banded, and we have found that we rarely recapture an owl in the same net run. A few bill-snap or make soft chitter calls while in the hand. The chitter call has also been heard upon release, eliciting soft chitters from the woods in response.

Monitoring in 2006 occurred on 50 nights from 8 October to 9 December, with the first owl caught a week later than the two previous years on 24 October. Twenty-eight saw-whets were captured, with a rate of 0.01 owls per net hour. Vocalizations were recorded on 16 nights, including our last night of operation, 9 December. Four owls were recaptured for known stopovers of three nights for two owls and 10 nights for an owl last recaptured on 4 December. Figure 1 shows the timing of fall migration of saw-whets at Buzzard's Roost from 2004-2006 controlling for effort. The number of owls captured is divided by effort, which is the number of nets multiplied by the number of hours the nets were open. One 12m net operated for 1 hour = 1 net hour. In 2004, more owls were captured per unit effort than in 2005 and 2006. Though fewer owls were captured, the timing of migration in 2005 appears similar to 2004 with most owls captured late October and early November. 2006 got off to a slow start with most owls captured in November.

Figure 1. Northern saw-whet owls captured per net hour from 2004-2006 at Buzzard's Roost in Ross County (N=113).



Six owls banded at the Buzzard's Roost banding station have been recaptured by other Project OwlNet stations. An after-second-year female banded on 21 October 2004 was recaptured 12 miles east of Bloomington, Indiana on 26 October 2005. A hatch-year female banded on 11 November 2004 was recaptured on 26 September 2005 near Tofte, Minnesota. Another hatch-year female banded on 8 November 2004 was recaptured on 10 October at the Straits of Mackinac, Michigan. A second-year female banded on 10 November 2004 was recaptured at Valley Falls State Park in West Virginia on 10 November 2005, while another second-year female banded on 8 November 2004 migrated to our west in 2005 and was recaptured on 30 November in Greene County, Indiana.

Three other banding stations monitored saw-whet owls in Ohio during the fall of 2006 (Table 1). The number of saw-whets captured per net hour is

similar between sites, suggesting that consistent monitoring in appropriate habitat may yield capture rates similar to the banding station near Chillicothe. While effort is not directly comparable between stations, capture rates at the Buzzard's Roost banding station of 0.23 to 0.01 owls per 12m net hour in 2004 and 2006 compare well to reported capture rates at Assateague, Virginia in 1992 and Cape May, New Jersey in 1993 of 0.211 and 2.83 owls per 10m net per 100 hours respectively (Brinker, 1997).

Consistent monitoring at different stations throughout Ohio may shed more light on variation in migration from year to year. It seems that more females migrate (Table 2). Adult males are thought to stay on or closer to territory to defend nesting sites or, when lack of food or severe weather necessitates, wander in search of food.

Table 1. Saw-whet owls captured at fall monitoring stations in Ohio during fall 2006

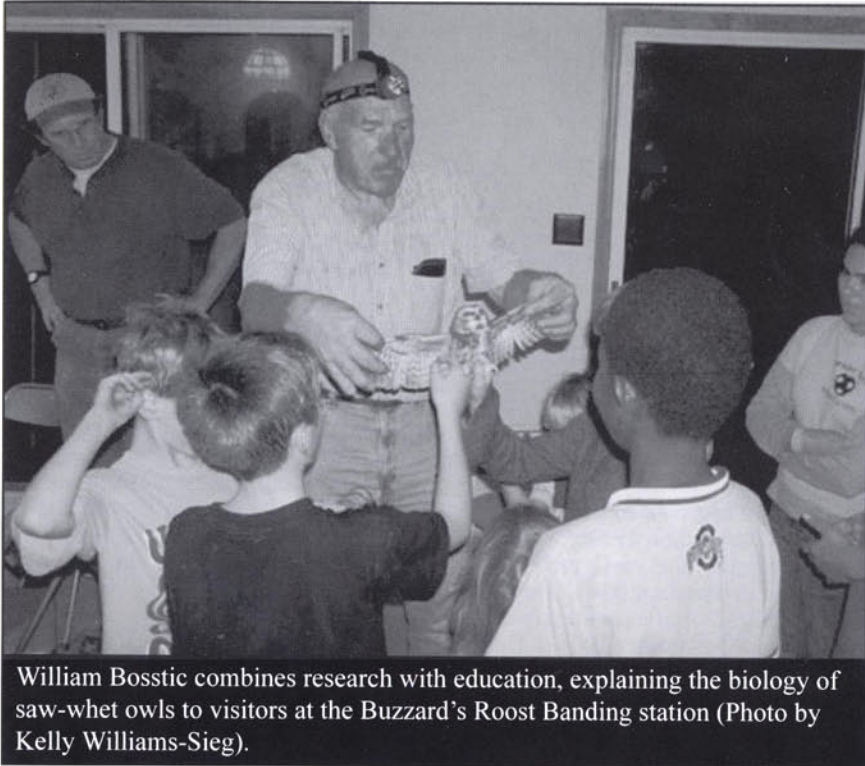
Banding Station	HY	SY	AHY	ASY	Total Owls	Nights	Net Hours	Owls per net hour
Buzzard's Roost, Chillicothe	7	3	6	12	28	50	1944.4	0.0144
Kelleys Island Tom Bartlett	8	4	1	1	14	19	310	0.0452
NE Seneca Co. Matt & Deb Plotts	1	0	0	0	1	6	90	0.0068
Sandusky Bay Tom Kashmer	0	0	1	0	1	6	90	0.0111

2006 left many banding stations wondering where all the owls were. We did not capture any owls banded by other stations but we did recapture our first owl we had banded during a previous season. This hatch-year female was originally banded on 29 October 2005 and recaptured 23 November 2006. It is unclear whether this owl's arrival nearly a month later in 2006 was attributable to change in breeding status (from a young bird to a potential breeder in 2006) or was indicative of a seemingly delayed migration. An after-second-year female banded on 1 November 2005 at Buzzard's Roost was recaptured at Long Point Bird Observatory, Ontario on 15 November 2006. Tom Bartlett reported seven saw-whets calling on 28 December 2006 on Kelleys Island after the Buzzard's Roost station had closed for the season (Whan, 2007). Reports from many saw-whet stations in the East that suggested that migration was delayed in 2006 seem to be supported by these observations. Consistent monitoring and continued cooperation among banding stations is needed to gain a clearer picture of the movements of these owls.

Table 2. Sex assignments of saw-whets caught in Ohio in 2006 (n=44).

Banding Station	Females	Males	Unknown
Buzzard's Roost, Chillicothe	20	3	5
Kelleys Island Tom Bartlett	10	1	3
NE Seneca Co. Matt & Deb Plotts	1	0	0
Sandusky Bay Tom Kashmer	1	0	0
Total	32	4	8

On 9 December 2006, after 50 nights and 1,944 net hours patrolled by volunteers willing to give up the comforts of home for cool enchanting evenings spent in the woods, we closed our nets for the season. A saw-whet continued to call near our nets. It was most likely an owl that had become wise to our traps, leaving us to wonder which one it was, when we had caught it, how long it would prowl our woods, where it was from and where it would go to. The quiet cry was a taunt, reminding us that so many of our questions remain unanswered.



William Bosstic combines research with education, explaining the biology of saw-whet owls to visitors at the Buzzard's Roost Banding station (Photo by Kelly Williams-Sieg).

Acknowledgments

This study is a volunteer effort conducted by licensed bird banders William Bosstic, Bob Scott Placier, and Kelly Williams-Sieg and would not be possible without many volunteers and financial support from the Scioto Valley Bird and Nature Club. Additional financial support has been provided through our Adopt-an-Owl program and the Ohio Ornithological Society.

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The Camp Dennison Gravel Pits

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There are many Ohio birding destinations as widely known for their natural or scenic beauty as for their excellent birding opportunities. But then again several hot spots are, well, let's say less than pristine. For the most part birders are realists, and our zeal to find birds knows no bounds. Non-birders are always surprised to learn that in our quest we often frequent any number of unnatural or man-made sites, which may include garbage dumps, landfills, sewage lagoons, development sites, and airports. And let's not forget gravel pits.

Cincinnati birders have known about the Camp Dennison gravel pits for four decades. Recently this site has become more widely familiar due to the abundance of waterfowl seasonally present each year and because of the rare species often found. The Camp Dennison gravel pits are arguably the best site in the Cincinnati area to find late fall and wintering waterfowl and waterbirds. By reviewing past Christmas Bird Count results, I have found the Camp Dennison pits have consistently attracted a greater diversity and number of waterfowl during the CBC season than any other local area site, including more likely-looking locations such as East Fork and Hueston Woods State Parks and the Ohio River. In fact, this site can rival many of the better-known waterfowl locations around the state.

Why waterfowl sometimes find gravel pits so appealing is a matter of speculation. And what makes this one more attractive than the many others nearby is a matter of debate. A couple of reasons seem fairly obvious. A couple of the pools are fairly deep, and some water remains open during all but the most severe winters. Many birds often remain through December and January. In fact, certain species seem to peak at these seasons. The distinction between the end of fall migration and the beginning of spring's is fuzzy here. The Camp Dennison gravel pits lie within the Cincinnati CBC circle. This count is always held on the Sunday after Christmas, and there are always plenty of waterfowl and other waterbirds, particularly American coots, still present here. Other local bird sighting records reflect good numbers of waterfowl found at Camp Dennison throughout the month of January. Only during the very coldest winters will we see most of the waterfowl, coots, and grebes move on. Another reason these birds appear here in large numbers may be the relative security the site has offered in past years. When the pits were actively mined, a no-trespassing rule was strictly enforced, so the birds were seldom disturbed, at least by casual visitors. Hunting has never been allowed here as far as I am aware. After the site was abandoned as a mining venue, it remained posted. For the most part area birders respected the rule, and we contented ourselves with viewing the birds from the perimeter of the property, easily enough done with a scope. The birds literally had the place to themselves. Unfortunately this may all change in the near future.

Most readers will already know this, but in the interest of clarity let me

define the term "gravel pit." There are a few subtle differences among this term and "borrow pit" and "quarry." A gravel pit is a tract of land, most often lying along a river or stream, excavated for the purpose of extracting gravel. A quarry, on the other hand, denotes a site dedicated to the extraction of larger rock, such as granite, limestone, or slate. Quarries are open pits, generally steeper-sided than gravel pits and if I understand correctly, waters in them are often shallow. A borrow pit is an area where soil or other material has been excavated, and "borrowed" for use at another site. The latter pits can commonly be seen along expressways, where the excavated material was used in the construction of the highway or to create nearby embankments for exit ramps. In southwestern Ohio, especially along the Little Miami and Great Miami Rivers, gravel pits predominate and there are literally hundreds of them, both active and inactive. Most of them hold water, but a few are dry.

Gravel pits, borrow pits, and quarries are well known to most Ohio birders and for good reason. These man-made lakes can be magnets for migrating and resident waterfowl and waterbirds. In some cases, the sparse and scrubby herbaceous vegetation that grows in the loose sandy and rocky soils around these pits attracts a variety of other interesting species as well. For instance, blue grosbeaks have had an affinity with gravel pits here in southwestern Ohio for at least the past twenty-five years. At times, any of these sites may attract birds and should be checked often. But some most definitely attract birds more consistently than others. The Camp Dennison gravel pits are a classic example of the latter.

The Camp Dennison gravel pits consist of slightly more than 350 acres of land and water. They are bounded on the east by SR 126, and to the north and west by the Little Miami River. Immediately to the south lies the small village of Camp Dennison. About half the acreage is water, with three large lakes and seven smaller ponds. The new landlords recently removed dikes separating the three large lakes and they are all now interconnected. The few trees present consist mostly of cottonwoods, willows, and locusts, with sycamores and maples predominant along the river. Herbaceous vegetation was once fairly sparse due to the sandy and rocky soil, but the municipality of Indian Hill has replanted large areas with a variety of plants and the area is looking more verdant. Shrubs, predominantly honeysuckle, dominate the higher ground around the perimeter.

Camp Dennison is a small, quiet village of about 600 people located on the eastern outskirts of greater Cincinnati. It lies in extreme eastern Hamilton County, along the west bank of the scenic Little Miami River, which here forms the border of Hamilton and Clermont counties. Just to the west is the affluent village of Indian Hill, to the north Miamiville, another small community, and to the south the historic village of Milford. State Route 126 is the main drag, and runs north/south right through the center of Camp Dennison. Even though this quaint and historic little village could best be described as suburban or even semi-rural, it lies near the center of one of Ohio's most populated areas and is located within the I-275 beltway encircling the greater Cincinnati area.

Originally named Germany when first settled in 1795, the name was changed in 1861 to Camp Dennison in honor of the U.S. Army training post located here during the Civil War. The camp was in turn named for William Dennison, Ohio's governor at the beginning of the war. There are several historical buildings and markers memorializing those times, but few outsiders

are aware of them. With the war's end, residents changed the town's name to Grand Valley, but the railroad refused to acknowledge the change on their schedules and continued to call the local station Camp Dennison, and so it has remained since 1861. Today the railroad is gone and the old railroad bed is part of the Loveland-Madeira bike/hike trail.

In 1946 the Ohio Gravel Company began operations in Camp Dennison. Later the gravel pits were acquired by Martin Marietta Aggregates, which continued the gravel-mining operation until the late 1990s, whereupon they ceased operations. For the next several years the Camp Dennison gravel pits remained inactive, and there was much speculation about their fate. After all, people said, they are just gravel pits, and in these days of rapid loss of critical habitats such as wetlands and forests, it is difficult to justify a conservation campaign to preserve an artificial water-filled crater. Around this time a developer proposed a 600-house development on the site, and the future of this waterfowl refuge seemed bleak.

In 2002 the village of Indian Hill stepped in and managed to purchase the site for \$7 million, ostensibly to protect their water supply--a city well field is less than half a mile away--and to create a recreation facility for Indian Hill residents. Indian Hill has ambitious recreational plans for the site, which they renamed "Grand Valley," in honor of an earlier appellation. In March and April of 2003, delegates of the Cincinnati Bird Club attended Indian Hill City Council meetings and were allowed to voice concerns about the effects the new ownership might have on the diverse and numerous avian species that use the pits. While not making any promises, the village of Indian Hill is on record as having set a goal to strike a balance between recreational usages and the wildlife and natural character of the area. One hopes they will be able to succeed, but only time will tell. One point of controversy is that Indian Hill has elected to keep the property private, restricting access to Indian Hill and Camp Dennison residents (with others who pay Indian Hill for water supplies), approximately 6400 people. I believe the initial plan was to restrict even this group by allowing a limited number of visitors per day. On the one hand this seems a good plan, as it would keep the disturbance to birds at a minimum. If it were open to the general public, even a tiny fraction of the greater Cincinnati population of 1.8 million people could potentially overwhelm this relatively small site. On the other hand, even a few people, depending on their activities, could stress the waterfowl. Non-motorized boating and off-leash dog walking are permitted at this time, two activities that don't bode well for waterfowl. Still, cold weather will limit this type of usage during peak waterfowl times. Changes are definitely taking place. In 2006 a \$2.7 million winter sports complex was built on four acres in the northwest corner of the property. In the meantime, non-resident birders are still watching the birds from the periphery with spotting scopes.

Some readers may remember the late Worth Randle, one of Ohio's birding pioneers and finest naturalists. Randle co-authored the 1953 *Birds of Southwestern Ohio* with Emerson Kemsies. In that work he made no mention of the Camp Dennison gravel pits in his list of local birding sites, but by the mid-1970s he had become a regular visitor to the pits, and virtually put it on the local birding map. Randle was a meticulous note taker, but after his death many of his early records were lost. We do however have many of his later records from about 1984 on. For many years he had an arrangement with managers of the

then-active gravel pits whereby he was granted access to the pits on Mondays. He often visited the site on Monday mornings during the late '70s and '80s and was more than willing to invite along any birders who cared to show up. Around 1991 Martin Marietta's policy changed, and from then on even Randle was denied access.

Worth had a unique distinction as one of the few birders who visited the interior of the gravel pits throughout the year. Because of this, he had numerous records of shorebirds and other warm-season species that area birders have been unable to add to during the ensuing years. It's one thing to look at waterfowl on open water at 200-400 yards during the colder months, but it's a whole other ballgame trying to see shorebirds at such distances with views obscured by warm-season foliage. Nonetheless, the shorebird records we do have, albeit dominated by Randle's data during the '80s, are impressive. Twenty-five species of shorebirds have been recorded at the Camp Dennison gravel pits, including rarities such as ruff (one, on 5/26/91), American avocet (twice, two on 7/14/04 and three on 8/25/07), willet (twice, two on 7/4/83 and one on 7/28/91), ruddy turnstone (one, on 5/29/85), buff-breasted sandpiper (one bird three times during August 1983, '84, and '85) and Wilson's phalarope (one, on 8/12/84). Western sandpipers were recorded on six occasions, all by Randle, with a high of six twice. He recorded 150 lesser yellowlegs on 5/5/85, 140 semipalmated sandpipers on 5/19/85, and 14 white-rumped sandpipers from 5/31/85 through 6/1/85, which gives an idea of what the relative abundance of shorebirds may have been. We have virtually no Camp Dennison shorebird records for the period between 1991 until 2004, when birders have seldom been granted permission to enter the property.

Rarities during these warmer seasons are by no means restricted to shorebirds. Randle found two purple gallinules on 10/1/89 and a pair of nesting common moorhens on 5/28/89, although I believe the nest failed. Other records include: snowy egret (one, on 4/19/03), little blue heron (five times, two on 7/10/88), yellow-crowned night-heron (three, on 7/4/83), and least tern (one, on 8/19/90).

Another example of lost records from Camp Dennison concerns blue grosbeaks. Worth told me personally that he found blue grosbeaks almost annually at Camp Dennison. Incidentally, grosbeaks are found with some regularity in other gravel pits throughout the greater Cincinnati area. But that's another story. We have Randle's written records from Camp D from 1984 through 1987, when he recorded blue grosbeaks in each of those four years. He had pairs during three of them, two hatch-year birds in '84, and three males in '86. Recently, Jeff Brown, part of a Cincinnati Zoo group conducting censuses for Indian Hill at Camp Dennison since the summer of '06, found a blue grosbeak in the pits on 7/23/06 and two males this year on 7/18. Bob Foppe, who has some limited access to the pits, reported three male blue grosbeaks this year, and the general consensus is that at least three pairs probably bred there this summer. You don't have to have too much of an imagination to think that blue grosbeaks were probably summer residents during many of those unexamined years. It's a pity that for the past 15 years or so birders have been denied access to this productive site.

The case for waterfowl and waterbirds at Camp D has been an altogether different story over those same years. While we still have some

of Randle's records, area birders have been able to census waterfowl and waterbirds regularly, and our records are much more comprehensive for these species. Even though access continues to be denied to birders, it is much easier to see those species while viewing the pits from outside on public property. In this way, the Camp Dennison pits make a vital contribution to the annual Cincinnati Christmas Bird Count. The diversity of waterfowl and waterbirds found here each year keeps ours among Ohio's leading counts in terms of total species, and has even allowed us to lead the state several times. While quite a few area birders regularly bird Camp D during this time of year, few have done so as often as Bob Foppe. Bob's regular visits to Camp Dennison have provided us with a clearer picture of migrant and wintering birds there and a better idea of their relative abundance.

Before continuing and with all due respect, just a caveat for northern Ohio birders. This is southwestern Ohio, not Lake Erie. Waterfowl occur in this extreme southern part of the state in considerably smaller numbers than on the Great Lakes. Also consider this is a relatively small bit of water, probably around 150 acres. That said, there have been 32 species of waterfowl (Anseriformes) recorded at Camp Dennison, not including a well-documented whooper swan (one, on 1/23/00), which was presumed to be an escaped bird (some didn't want it presumed). Waterfowl rarities recorded at Camp D have included: greater white-fronted goose (five, on 3/1/03), snow goose (three records, 20 on 1/20/07), cackling goose (twice, with five on 1/22/05), tundra swan (three times, with 18 on 12/3/02), trumpeter swan (one, Jan. 10-22, 2000), Eurasian wigeon (one, on 2/1/07), greater scaup (at least twenty records but 15 on 11/23/02), harlequin duck (one, on 11/27/05), long-tailed duck (one, 1/26-2/3/07), surf scoter (twice, six on 12/4/93 and one on 3/22/07), white-winged scoter (twice, one on 5/1/00 and three on 2/10/04). In addition a couple of rare grebes have been found: eared grebe (one, on 11/18/06) and red-necked grebe (as many as two birds were seen from 1/4-19/03).

The real story lies with the more common species. Twenty species of ducks, pied-billed grebes and American coots are fairly common to abundant annual visitors at Camp Dennison, beginning around late October and continuing through the end of March. There may be smaller numbers of some species during mid-January in the coldest winters, but during normal to mild winters one would hardly notice a change. Consider the high numbers and the dates recorded for the more common species. Canada goose (1600 twice, 12/21/05 & 2/11/07), wood duck (20, on 8/18/85), Gadwall (178, on 2/1/07), American wigeon (80, on 1/9/00), American black duck (50, on 3/3/03), mallard (500, on 12/21/05), blue-winged teal (101, on 9/2/84), northern shoveler (77, on 12/28/03), northern pintail (37, on 2/28/07), green-winged teal (58, on 10/10/05), canvasback (65, on 3/5/07), redhead (200, on 3/11/84), ring-necked duck (600, on 12/26/04), lesser scaup (400, on 12/6/84), bufflehead (75, on 12/28/03), common goldeneye (six times, 3/16/03 & 1/13/85), hooded merganser (170, on 1/9/06), common merganser (47, on 1/24/05), red-breasted merganser (58, on 3/18/04), ruddy duck (70, on 12/12/03), pied-billed grebe (94, on 12/28/03) and American coot (2200, on 10/30/06). With the exception of wood duck, blue-winged teal and red-breasted merganser, the other species can be regularly expected, some in good numbers, through the winter from late December through the beginning of February.

For the past five years, the Cincinnati CBC has never taken place earlier than 12/26 and was as late as 12/30 twice. On those five counts, Camp Dennison averaged 1179 individuals and 16.4 species of ducks and geese. American coots and pied-billed grebes averaged 688 individuals combined. That's a total average of 18.4 species and 1867 individual birds on a 150-acre body of water in the winter. The individual species averages for that five-count period are: Canada goose 378, gadwall 56, American wigeon 44, American black duck 9, mallard 111, northern shoveler 34, northern pintail 1, green-winged teal 8, canvasback 9, redhead 8, ring-necked duck 370, greater scaup 1, lesser scaup 11, bufflehead 48, common goldeneye 1, hooded merganser 66, ruddy duck 24, pied-billed grebe 41, and American coot 647.

Other winter species include bald eagle, an annual visitor since 2002. And there are always a few of the common gull species around during appropriate seasons. The Camp Dennison gravel pits are viewed primarily as a waterbird spot, but songbirds, raptors, and other species are also present in good numbers. Sparrows are common in all the appropriate seasons. American tree sparrow (2000 on 12/12/82) can be abundant in winter. Rare winter visitors have included a Brewer's blackbird in the company of rusty blackbirds on 12/26/04. Merlins made appearances in March and October 2004. American pipits occasionally show up and 150 were recorded on 10/25/84. Northern harriers are seen from time to time. Horned larks appear during the winter months, and Lapland longspurs and snow buntings, while rare, are occasionally found at that season. Common permanent residents include: great blue heron, red-tailed, red-shouldered and Cooper's hawks, black vulture (75, on 3/1/03), belted kingfisher, and eastern bluebirds.

Some of the representative summer residents include: green heron, yellow-billed cuckoo, most of the swallows, willow flycatcher, eastern phoebe, eastern kingbird, warbling vireo, yellow-throated warbler, common yellowthroat, prothonotary warbler (occasional), yellow-breasted chat, indigo bunting, and orchard and Baltimore orioles. A black-billed cuckoo was confirmed breeding at Camp Dennison this past summer. Migrant songbirds would not be expected in great numbers in the pits themselves, but they should occur, along with many common summer and winter residents, in the adjacent wooded riparian corridor along the Little Miami River. Migrant warblers can occur in the pits, as did 175 palm warblers on 9/6/85.

The Camp Dennison gravel pits are an exceptional birding area. General birder access to the interior of the gravel pits is not likely to happen in the near future, if ever, so it's possible that many of the area's avian secrets may remain locked. I believe the village of Indian Hill has plans for a nature center. If so, staff personnel will possibly note their observations, as might resident birders and the occasional survey groups. So we will probably learn more than we have during the 15 years it was totally off limits. It will be interesting to see what will happen if a really rare bird shows up. Will exceptions be made? Something similar to that occurred recently when blue grosbeaks and the three American avocets seen on 8/25/07 were reported publicly via the Internet on our local sightings log. As it happened, the avocets were visible from SR 126. If it had been a little stint, I think we would have been out of luck.

Birders can still view the gravel pits from the periphery, either along Rt. 126 or the Camp Dennison Nature Trail, which can be accessed off of Ulrich

Ave in Camp Dennison. There are several wide pullouts along SR 126 where you can safely park. The roadside is public property, and I have heard of no complaints about anyone taking a few steps further to improve their view. There is a business with an adjacent parking lot located at the north end of the pits offering an excellent view of the northern section of the gravel pits. They don't seem to mind if you park there briefly when they're closed on weekends or after hours, but of course that can change.

The Camp Dennison gravel pits can be located in the Ohio Atlas on page 75, 4-C. To get there from the intersection of I-71 and I-275, take I-275 east. Go about five miles and take exit # 54, Wards Corner Rd. Turn right (south) onto Wards Corner Rd. and go about 1.5 miles until it meets SR 126. Turn left (east) onto SR 126 and go about ¼ of a mile to the stop sign. Follow the sign for SR 126 and turn right (south). Continue south on SR 126 and cross the bridge over the Little Miami. The Camp Dennison gravel pits will be on your left for the next mile. This truly is a great birding site and you won't be disappointed. Just be sure you bring a scope.

Acknowledgements

The bird records cited are from numerous individuals and sources that have been compiled by Ned Keller and others and organized in a database by Ned that can be found on his website, Birding in Cincinnati, <http://www.cincinnatibirds.com/>. The direct link for the Birding in Cincinnati database is: <http://cincinnatibirds.com/database/index.php>. The author benefited from personal communications with David Styer, Robert Foppe, and the late Worth Randle.

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Personal notes from Indian Hill village council meetings as a Cincinnati Bird Club delegate from 24 March 2003 and 21 April 2003.

A History of Camp Dennison:

<http://home.fuse.net/campdennison/camphistory.htm>

The Village of Indian Hill:

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The Cincinnati Enquirer:

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Top photo: Denise Lane heard hissing coming from this grain bin in an abandoned Columbiana County barn. Middle photo: Bob Lane photographed this turkey vulture chick in the bin on 21 June. Bottom photo: On 21 July, the chick grumpily submits to another photo by Bob Lane; fully fledged by 28 July, it remained in the bin at the top