

*The Ohio*



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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.

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Winter (Dec.-Feb.) - March 25  
Spring (Mar.-May) - June 25  
Summer (Jun.-Jul.) - August 25  
Fall (Aug.-Nov.) - December 25

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### The Ohio Cardinal

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*On the Cover: White-winged Crossbill* - Cleveland Hts., Cuyahoga Co., 13 March 2000. Photo by Laura Gooch.

### Winter 1999-2000 Overview

by Bill Whan

Real winter lasted about three weeks this time around in Ohio. Not unlike a year ago, except about two weeks later, persistent snow and sub-freezing daily high temperatures arrived during the third week of January and lasted through the first week of February. There were conspicuous empty periods in the reports of certain species during that span; these gaps may not be obvious in the reports, where we tend to concentrate on the exceptional to the detriment of the routine. The gaps were likelier to be an ugly-weather result of reduced birder coverage than low bird numbers in some cases.

Because persistent bitter weather arrived late, we witnessed many late-lingering birds, a few of them indeed so late that one could make a case for them as early migrants. Swallows actually spanned the period, with no fewer than four new record late dates for northern rough-winged swallow in December, and early tree swallows in late February. Bitter weather having also departed early, a week of the season's only temperatures above 65°F began statewide on 23 February, accompanied by winds averaging above 10 knots in the southwest quarter, and resulted in some notably early arrivals, as well as a copious influx of expected migrants such as vultures, killdeers, and woodcocks.

Drought far to our north apparently depressed seed and fruit crops, and sent redpolls, grosbeaks, crossbills, siskins, and waxwings south in profusion, though not always to Ohio. We had but a single Bohemian waxwing report, but New England and the upper Midwest reported spectacular numbers. Grosbeaks in Ohio were nothing to brag about, nor were snowy owls. Rough-legged hawks and northern shrikes, however, seemed to be everywhere this winter, the latter seen at times well south of their customary range in the state. Florida had its first records of rough-legged hawks this winter. Siskins, and redpolls especially, had a good season. Golden eagles and mergansers appeared in record numbers. More than a few tundra swans and some sandhill cranes apparently overwintered, or at least overlapped their migrations.

So it was a winter when a rose-breasted grosbeak could frequent a feeder up in New Brunswick at the same time a first-record snowy owl could be found in Florida's sand dunes. Closer to home, another apparent jaeger and a kittiwake showed up in southern Ohio, while mockingbird numbers were up in the north. Cave swallows might well have overflowed Ohio, but were not recorded, though many showed up across the Lake in Ontario, where a specimen examined turned out, still more amazingly, to be of the southwestern race *P. f. pelodoma*, and others of this species lingered into mid-December in New Jersey, Virginia, and North Carolina. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reckoned this the warmest winter in the US since they began keeping records 105 years ago; in fact, the last three winters have, successively, been the warmest during that span, indicating a trend in which we might expect some fundamental changes in birds' movements. In view of all this, it is difficult to explain why relatively few of our half-hardy species—such as brown thrasher, gray catbird, eastern phoebe, etc.—were reported during the period. And it is significant that this winter did not come close to matching last winter's eight warbler and 11 shorebird species.

Four Review Species were reported, and details for all were sent to the OBR: Bohemian waxwing, western grebe, Harris's sparrow, and two Ross's geese. In the

following reports, Christmas Bird Count data are not repeated unless of exceptional significance; for most CBC results, consult the summary. We are grateful to those who participate in and compile Christmas Bird Counts, as we are to others who send in their winter sightings for the public record; a foul-weather friend is a friend indeed.

It is always enlightening to compare a season's bird sightings with those of the previous year's. Now that *The Ohio Cardinal* is closer to being caught up with its missing issues, this should be possible from now on. In late March we mailed to eligible subscribers a special double issue covering Autumn of 1998 and Winter of 1998-1999. Our newer subscribers, not eligible for this 60-page bonus issue as part of their subscriptions, may want to have one: beyond two seasonal reports from guest editor Bob Conlon, and the season's CBC summary from Ned Keller, it contains Don Burton's article on weather-related waterfowl groundings, Frank Renfrow's look at the birds of the Hocking Hills, and a guide to birding Lake La Su An WA by Jeff Grabmeier. It is available for the single-issue price of \$3.75 from the Publisher, at the address inside the *Cardinal*'s inside front cover.

The following reports follow the taxonomic order of the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of *The AOU Check-list of North American Birds* (1998). Underlined names of species indicate those on the Ohio Bird Records Committee's Review List; adequate documentation of such sightings is needed to add reports to the official Ohio records. County names are supplied for certain locations, and appear *italicized*. Other abbreviations should be readily understood, with the following possible exceptions: CBC=Christmas Bird Count; CVNRA=Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area; *vide*="in trust of," said of data conveyed on behalf of another observer; GRWA=Grand River Wildlife Area; Killbuck=Killbuck Wildlife Area; Killdeer=Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area; Magee=Magee Marsh Wildlife Area; Metzger=Metzger Marsh Wildlife Area; MP=Metropark; m obs=many observers; MWF=Miami-Whitewater Forest; MW=Miami-Whitewater Wetlands; NWR=National Wildlife Refuge; OBRC=Ohio Bird Records Committee; ONWRC=monthly census at Ottawa NWR, reported by E. Pierce; ph=photograph; Res=reservoir; Res'n=reservation; RTLS=Ravenna Training and Logistics Site, a *Portage* site surveyed by L. Rosche *et al.*; SF=State Forest; SNP=State Nature Preserve; SP=State Park; WA=Wildlife Area; WWTP=Westerly Wastewater Treatment Plant, in Cleveland; ~≈approximately.



This red-breasted nuthatch frequented the feeders at Highbanks Metro Park, Delaware Co., throughout the winter season. Photo by Joe Hammond (18 February 2000).

## The Reports

**Red-throated Loon:** After autumn reports of 16 birds, only two turned up: a fly-by at Lakeshore MP on 4 Dec (J. Pogacnik), and a basic-plumaged bird on Meander Res 18 Dec, described for the Youngstown CBC (C. Babyak *et al.*).

**Common Loon:** Decent numbers persisted through December, with a high of 79 off Headlands Beach SP on the 11<sup>th</sup> (K. Metcalf), then stragglers into January when 15 birds were reported, the last on the 26<sup>th</sup> at Perkins Beach, Cleveland (P. Lozano *et al.*).

**Pied-billed Grebe:** Only a few hung around through the 1/16-2/6 frigid spell. C. Holt had two at Summit Lk on 25 Jan, and H. Armstrong 12 at East Fork SP 27 Jan, the latter the high count for a single location that month.

**Horned Grebe:** The cold snap discouraged horned grebes, or at least those who might observe them. A bird on 2 Feb (D. Sanders, D. Burton) was aided by the warm water outflow at Baysshore PP. Only two sizeable counts: 30 at Sims Park, *Cuyahoga*, on 15 Dec (C. Johnston *et al.*) and 66 at Lakeshore MP, *Lake*, on 12 Dec (J. Pogacnik).

**Western Grebe:** Amazing was a second report for 1999, this one found at Clear Fork Res, *Richland/Morrow*, by J. Herman on 15 Dec. It remained at least through the 18<sup>th</sup> for E. Pierce, as well as for the Mansfield CBC. Documentation from both observers is with the OBRC.

**American White Pelican:** Last winter's bird on 10 Dec set a late record. This year, another surpassed it by showing up on 19 Dec in *Mahoning* for B. Jones; it was seen at least through the following day (L. Rosche).

**Double-crested Cormorant:** Seen in at least small numbers on Lk Erie through the period. R. Harlan and S. Wagner had eight on Turning Pt. Isl in Sandusky on 9 Jan, S. Wulkowicz two birds near S. Bass Isl on 16 Jan, and P. Lozano one at Avon Lk PP on 30 Jan. H. Petruschke had one at Eastlake PP on 20 Feb. Inland, one was at Buck Ck SP on 4 Dec (D. Overacker).

**Great Blue Heron:** Single-locale highs in the north included ~40 at Baysshore PP on 27 Dec (B. Morrison *et al.*), 30 at East Harbor SP on 9 Jan (R. Harlan, S. Wagner), 21 on 20 Feb at Headlands Beach SP (H. Petruschke), and 27 in the CVNRA on 21 Feb (T&MA Romito). The Gypsum CBC reported 200 on 1 Jan. J. Pogacnik called them "hard to come by in the NE" despite warm weather.

**Great Egret:** One stuck it out through some chilly weather to be found by J. Pogacnik on 26 Dec at Camp Perry, *Ottawa*. This is lateish, but one stayed at Medusa Marsh through 1/1 last winter to fluff January lists for some folks.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Away from Lk Erie, two imm were at Bluffton, *Allen*, in the bitter cold of 22 Jan. Two others reported at Greenlawn Dam in Columbus on 27 Feb (H. Fradkin) may have been the ones present six weeks later (B. Conlon).

**Black Vulture:** The east-central colonies flourished, with ~20 at the Lk Buckhorn roost, *Holmes*, on 15 Jan (T. Sponseller); L. Deiningner saw two over Killbuck, *Wayne*, on 25 Jan; and ten in the *Holmes/Tuscarawas* area on 5 Feb (S. Snyder, L. Yoder). At the end of January D. St. John counted 64 on the roof of the Old Man's Cave lodge in *Hocking*. Most striking of all was a count of 400+ birds described by veteran observer B. Lund over *Brown* near Aberdeen on 2 Dec, the state's first report of over 200 of this species. 93 apparently stayed for the Ohio River CBC on the 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Turkey Vulture:** Some excellent numbers at southern roosts included 357 on the *Athens* CBC of 18 Dec; 150+ were at Athens's North Hill roost alone on 26 Dec (B. Whan *et al.*, ph). Very unusual mid-winter sightings in the north included one at the Painesville dump on 6 Jan (J. Pogacnik), two—for the second year in a row—in *Trumbull* on 9 Jan (D&J Hochadel), and a stunning six near Fremont on 16 Jan, admittedly the last day before real cold set in (Z. Baker). After several birds wintered last year in the CVNRA, vultures were seen there only in Dec and Feb this time (A&D Chassar). A big push came between 23 and 26 Feb, when strong winds and warmth from the south brought 22 reports of 91 birds statewide.

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** Apparent migrants, some of them rather early, passed through in February. N. Barber found one in Mayfield, *Ciyahoga*, on 5 Feb, and one lingered at East Fork SP from 5 Feb to at least 12 Feb (B. Foppe). Four were seen at Killdeer (M. Warren) on the 27<sup>th</sup>, then six there on the following day (J. Ruedisueli). Two were frequenting Pickerington Ponds in *Franklin* on the 28<sup>th</sup> (R. Cressman), where two remained as late as 1 Apr (C. Corbin).

**Snow Goose:** Numbers overwintered in the NW, particularly at Ottawa, where the ONWRC counted 45 on 2 Jan, then 29 on 6 Feb. Scattered mid-winter birds were found in the NE, with a high of 14 in the Funk area of *Wayne* on 19 Jan (S. Snyder). Most interesting were reports from the SW: one at Meldahl Dam on 17 Dec (F. Renfrow), four in *Clinton* from 4 to 16 Jan (L. Gara), a flight of ~200 over Spring Grove Cemetery, *Hamilton*, on 2 Feb (C. Tucker), a bird in *Clermont* on 9 Feb (D. Morse), and 10 at East Fork SP on 12 Feb (B. Foppe). By late Feb, migrants included 50-75 at Ottawa on 26 Feb and 49 in *Lake* on the 27<sup>th</sup> (J. Pogacnik).

**Ross's Goose:** Two individuals of this Review Species were found, both documented for the OBR. D. Sanders reported one from *Fayette* on 19 Jan; this record has since been accepted. Documentation from R. Harlan and S. Wagner for one found in *Ottawa* near ONWR on 29 Jan has yet to be reviewed.

**Tundra Swan:** Over 800 birds in 28 reports. Birds apparently wintered in good numbers near Lk Erie: C. Caldwell counted 165 at Ottawa on 4 Dec, the Romitos 98 there on 2 Jan, and the Hirises had 38 on the Magee census of 20 Feb. The ONWRC came up with 283 on 5 Dec, 195 on 2 Jan, and 179 on 6 Feb. South of there, 19 birds on 2 Feb at Independence Dam, *Defiance*, were reported by J. Yochem, and 20 at Killbuck from 2 to 27 Feb (S. Snyder) were good numbers. Still further south, a bird at Camp Dennison, *Hamilton*, from 25 Jan (D. Russell) to 27 Jan (H. Armstrong) was unusual. The 18 Dec Cleveland CBC reported 124 birds, highest count in the past 60 years.

**Wood Duck:** Wintering woodies no longer occasion much surprise, but 10 up in *Defiance* on the cold date of 28 Jan (J. Yochem) raised supercilias; they were probably concentrated and sustained by open water in the rapids near Independence Dam. Warm outflow from the sewage plant on Summit St in Toledo probably allowed a drake to continue to 2 Feb (D. Sanders, D. Burton).

**Gadwall:** A count of 76 inland at Highbanks MP, *Delaware*, on 18 Dec (J. Hammond) was a good one, 32 luxuriating in Castalia's warm water on 21 Jan (V. Fazio) were no surprise, and 12 at Lake Rockwell on 1 Jan (L. Rosche) and three the following day in Cleveland (C. Holt) were coasting along in the wake of warm weather. B. Hardesty had one in *Hancock* on 11 Jan. Six at Killbuck on 5 Feb (S. Snyder) were more daring, as was one at Paint Ck SP on 16 Feb (L. Gara).

**Eurasian Wigeon:** Brian McGuire found one in the ONWR on 26 Feb.

**American Wigeon:** Southbound migrants had mostly passed before the period, but some braved our brief winter, as Jan records included two on New Year's Day in Northfield (D&A Chasar), four at ONWR the following day (MA&T Romito), a bird on the 9<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, and on the 30<sup>th</sup> at Buck Ck SP (D. Overacker), and two at Avon Lk PP's warm waters on the 29<sup>th</sup> (S. Zadar). Ten were on Hoover Res, *Delaware*, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> (R. Thorn). J. Yochem had one at Independence Dam, *Defiance*, on 19 Feb, and by the last week of Feb, migrants were flooding north, as 250 at Metzger on the 28<sup>th</sup> (J. Hammond).

**American Black Duck:** This hardy species was present in normal plentitude throughout the period, numbers which included 724 at Mosquito Ck Lk on 19 Dec (C. Babyak), 820 at Ottawa on 2 Jan (Romitos), 1400+ at Castalia on 21 Jan (V. Fazio), and 800+ at Blendon Woods MP, *Franklin*, on 6 Feb (R. Thorn).

**Mallard:** The most abundant waterfowl species, as usual. High count by far was 16,500 on the 2 Jan ONWRC (the CBC centered there counted 27,356 that same day); on 23 Jan the Romitos had 8200 at the same location. S. Snyder reported an apparent mallard X black duck hybrid at Funk, *Wayne*, on 23 Feb.

**Blue-winged Teal:** The Gypsum CBC found one on 1 Jan. Warmth in late Feb ushered four to Headlands Beach SP as early as 26 Feb (H. Petruschke).

**Northern Shoveler:** A few lingered into Jan, some, such as 93 at Castalia on the 21<sup>st</sup> (V. Fazio), benefiting from warmer waters. Tougher birds were one in the MWW on 15 Jan (N. Cade), six at Camp Dennison, *Hamilton*, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> (Y. Mohlman, fide B. Foppe), one the same day at Buck Ck SP (D. Overacker), one at Paint Ck SP on 1 Feb (L. Gara), and three at Killbuck on 5 Feb (S. Snyder).

**Northern Pintail:** Lingered Dec birds topped out at 26 on the 16<sup>th</sup> at Mosquito Ck (C. Babyak), with CBC counts in *Seneca* and *Trumbull* in the 30s. Very scarce during the coldest days, with one at Wellington Res on 16 Jan (C Holt), one at Lorain on 23 Jan (S. Zadar), and 12 in *Brown* on 3 Feb (L. Gara). Six were counted on the ONWRC of 6 Feb. Late Feb brought northbound birds, as 80 at Funk on the 27<sup>th</sup> (S. Snyder).

**Green-winged Teal:** Tenderer ducks, a few nonetheless showed up during our brief period of challenging weather: 10 were at Camp Dennison, *Hamilton*, on 16 Jan, then five on the 23<sup>rd</sup> (B. Foppe), two were at Perrysburg on 30 Jan (M. Sweeney), two in the CVNRA on 31 Jan (T&MA Romito), four at Killbuck on 5 Feb (S. Snyder), and four at Greenlawn Dam, Columbus, on 20 Feb (J. Dennison).

**Canvasback:** The huge Sandusky Bay aggregations do not always last long, and it seemed few reporters witnessed them this year. B. Royse counted ~1500 at Avon Lk PP on 1 Feb, and N. Barber 132 at Eastlake PP on 19 Feb; by the 28th, the 600+ off Lorain (S. Zadar) were no doubt moving north. The Ottawa CBC on 2 Jan tallied 2235. Interesting inland records included 18 on 5 Jan at Wilmington Res (L. Gara), and 120 at Meldahl Dam, *Clermont*, on 11 Feb (F. Renfrow).

**Redhead:** The 62 CBCs found a mere 45 redheads. The largest wintering flock was reported at Avon Lake PP on 29 Jan, where S. Zadar found ~400 birds. Most passed through quickly during the last week of February on the way north, the larger sightings being of 350 at Maumee Bay SP (J. Hammond) and 800+ off Lorain the following day (S. Zadar). The closest thing to an inland deep-winter report was of 8 at Paint Ck SP on 16 Feb (L. Gara).

**Ring-necked Duck:** Not the hardest of ducks, this species was able to dally in warm weather: 170 were at Wellington Res, *Lorain*, on New Year's Day (R. Harlan, S. Wagner), 80 were at Camp Dennison, *Hamilton*, on 10 Jan (D. Brinkman *et al.*), and 34 on 16 Jan on S. Bass Isl (S. Wulkowicz). After the cold weather, only warmed water retained them, as six at Avon Lake PP on 23 Jan (S. Zadar), through 30 Jan (C. Holt). One was in the Maumee R rapids from 5-13 Feb (E. Tramer), but by the 27<sup>th</sup> migration was fully underway, with ~300 at Killbuck (S. Snyder).

**Greater Scaup:** Observed numbers were down in a warm winter, with ~500 at Avon Lk PP on 1 Feb (B. Royse) the highest count. On 22 Dec at Bayshore PP, *Lucas*, ~300 (J. Hammond) was a good count for the west, as were three at the Newton gravel pits, *Hamilton*, on 27 Feb (J. Lehman) for the SW and a male at Silver Ck MP, *Summit*, on 3 Jan (R. Harlan, S. Wagner) inland in the NE. Statewide CBC total only 148 birds.

**Lesser Scaup:** Wintering birds seemed scattered, with few large concentrations. ~800 bobbed off Avon Lk PP from 29 Jan (S. Zadar) to 1 Feb (B. Royse). By late Feb returning migrants were abundant: J. Hammond found 3000+ mixed scaups, mostly this species, along the Bayshore PP-Maumee Bay SP shoreline on 29 Feb.

**Surf Scoter:** 18 reports of 25 birds. Mid-winter birds included one 16 Jan at Lakeshore MP, *Lake* (J. Pogacnik), one 23 Jan at Eastlake PP (N. Barber), and two at Avon Lk PP on 30 Jan (E. Pierce); latest was one at Avon Lk PP 6-12 Feb (C. Holt *et al.*).

**White-winged Scoter:** Few reports, but normal. All follow: two off Lakeshore MP, *Lake*, on 29 Dec (J. Pogacnik), two off Bayshore PP on 30 Jan (S. Stockford), and four off Lakeshore MP on the latter date (Pogacnik). No birds of this species on the CBCs.

**Black Scoter:** All reports: two off Lakeshore MP on 6 Dec (J. Pogacnik), one at Bay Village on 26 Dec (B. Finkelstein *et al.*), one on 1 Jan at Lakeshore MP (Pogacnik), one on 2 Jan at Bay Village (P. Lozano *et al.*), and a female on 29 Jan at Avon Lk PP (S. Zadar), where E. Pierce found a male and a female the same day. One bird on the CBCs.

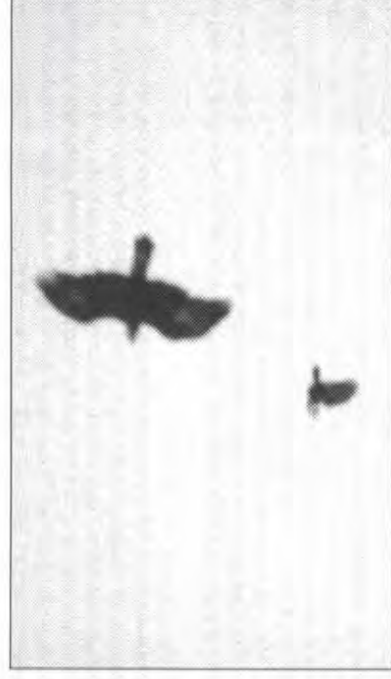
**Northern Goshawk:** Five reports, probably of four birds. **J. Pogacnik** had an imm. in the GRWA on 11 Dec. **T. Bartlett** saw one over Tiffin on 16 Jan, and **Z. Baker** one there on the 20<sup>th</sup>. One was over the Little Miami R., *Hamilton*, on 20 Feb (**D. Hadine**), and **D. St. John** reported one in Toledo's Woodlawn Cemetery on 29 Jan.

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** Largest numbers reported were from the NE, with next-largest from the SW; other than in some CBCs, we have disappointingly few reporters from the SE. Interesting sightings elsewhere included one along Rt 58 in Lorain on 9 Jan (**R. Harlan**, **S. Wagner**), and one north of Lancaster, *Fairfield*, on 6 Feb (**D. Sanders**, **D. Burton**). **L. Rosche** offered a summary from his *Portage/Summit* domain: "West Branch SP has at least four birds, Kent another four. Ravenna TLS had six to 10, Twin Lks another four. Stow has at least 10 and probably more, Munroe Falls has three, Cuyahoga Falls has at least six, Tallmadge at least two, Aurora (Walden) has two, Shalersville three-four, add [fitional] in CVNRA and so on...the notion of a trend toward increase in this species is certainly valid."

**Red-tailed Hawk:** **E. Tramer** noted one sporting all-white plumage save for an orange tail near Whitehouse, *Lucas*, on 13 Feb. The eponymous tail does seem the part of this species' plumage least susceptible to albinism/leucism. Another white bird, a regular for the past few years, was south of Chardon during the period (**A. Fjeldstad**).

**Rough-legged Hawk:** Over 200 reported other than on CBCs, for an excellent showing by this impressive buteo. Though commoner in the state's northern half, reports reached all the way to the River—and why not, since Florida had its first state records of the species this winter? **S. Snyder et al.** found the species on 70 occasions during 23 visits to SW *Wayne* during the period. High count was 39 in The Wilds, *Muskingum*, on 21 Feb (**D. St. John**), matching the nice total for the 18 Dec *Millersburg* CBC.

**Golden Eagle:** Unprecedented numbers of documented sightings this winter (none last year), presaged by the record high numbers at fall hawk-watch sites. **H. Petruschke** photographed one on 1 Dec near Kirtland Hills, *Lake*, where only four miles distant **R. Harlan** and **S. Wagner** found one (and the same?) on 15 Dec—on Eagle Road as fate would have it. **B. Faber** had good looks at an imm bird in *Geauga* on 16 Dec (*file D. Best*), and **A. Duff** photographed another in S. Chagrin during Feb (*file K. Metcalf*). **J. Diller** reported a subad on 24 Dec at Lake La Su An WA. A young bird discovered at The Wilds, *Muskingum*, on 9 Jan (**D. St. John**) was refound (at least a bird in the same plumage) through the period by m obs, such as **J. Bens et al.** on 27 Feb. Elsewhere, **D. Brinkman et al.** described well an imm bird near Chillicothe on 9 Feb. **D. St. John** photographed another near Lk Hope, *Vinton*, on 28 Feb. Something of the proportions of age classes of these eagles is suggested in the 31 Oct 99 records from the Holiday Beach observatory: two adults, five subadults, and 4 juveniles.



This golden eagle, flying with an American crow, was seen near Kirtland Hills, Lake Co., on 1 December 1999. Photo by Haans Petruschke.

**Oldsquaw:** In recent years likelier inland, this winter Lake Erie was the better place. All reports: 4 and 12 Dec *Lakeshore* MP (**J. Pogacnik**), 12 Dec *Headlands Beach* SP (**H. Petruschke**), 19 Dec in the CVNRA (**T&M Romito**) and Huron (**D&A Chasar**), 20 Dec *Ladue Res* (**D. Ferris**), 22 Dec *Cleveland* (**P. Lozano et al.**), 24 Dec *Fairport Hbr* (**Petruschke**), 1 Jan *Headlands Beach* SP (**L. Rosche**, **R. Hannikman**), 18 Jan *Bayshore* PP (**S. Stockford**) through the 23<sup>rd</sup> (**G. Links**), and 29 Feb at Lorain (**S. Zadar**).

**Bufflehead:** For years, the Lake islands have claimed the record for numbers of this species, as in this period when 700+ were found on the Kelley's Isl census for 19 Dec (**T. Bartlett**), and 1502 on the Islands CBC on the 16<sup>th</sup>. On 1 Feb ~200 were off Avon Lk PP (**B. Roysse**), and 60 off *Eastlake* on 20 Feb (**H. Petruschke**). Inland, 20 were on the *Wilmington Res* on 12 Jan, diminishing to four by 24 Feb (**L. Gara**).

**Common Goldeneye:** Observers from shore generally see only a fraction of the goldeneyes present on Lk Erie, especially this year, as ~200 off *Bayshore* PP on 22 Dec (**J. Hammond et al.**), 516 off S Bass Isl on 16 Jan (**S. Wulkowicz**), or ~400 off *Rocky River* Pk on 23 Jan (**S. Zadar**). The Toledo CBC reported 837 on 18 Dec. Three were in Columbus on 25 Jan, then nine on the 28<sup>th</sup> (**A. Froehlich**).

**Hooded Merganser:** High count 350 at Lk Rockwell 19-22 Dec (**L. Rosche**), a flock which diminished to a single bird by 1 Jan. After a chilly week for the holidays, decent numbers remained, but the big freeze in the second half of Jan chased most of the hoodies south. A few remained at hot water on Lk Erie, as two at Avon Lk PP on 29 Jan (**S. Zadar**) and five at *Eastlake* PP the following day (**C. Holt**). Remarkable numbers persisted in ice-free spillways beneath major dams in central Ohio: **R. Thorn** had 48 at Hoover Res on 23 Jan, and **A. Froehlich** 23 at *Griggs Dam* on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Merganser:** High count was ~4000 off the *Bayshore* PP-Maumee Bay SP shoreline on 22 Dec (**J. Hammond**, **D. Sanders**). Inland high was 10 at *Buck Ck* SP on 15 Jan (**D. Overacker**). 384 flew by *Lakeshore* MP, *Lake*, on 19 Jan (**J. Pogacnik**). Frozen nearshore water concentrated 225 at *Eastlake* PP on 23 Jan for **C. Holt**. Forty-five seen by the same observer on 27 Feb there were probably headed north.

**Red-breasted Merganser:** Good numbers of birds on Lk Erie persisted into Jan, whereupon ice pushed most out of sight until early Feb. **J. Pogacnik** counted 6788 passing *Lakeshore* MP over three hours on 6 Dec, while warm waters at *Eastlake* PP yielded **C. Holt** 550 on 23 Jan. The *Elyria-Lorain* CBC on 18 Dec counted 26,492. *Downstate*, **J. Lehman** had 25-30 at *East Fork* SP on 12 Dec, and **N. Cade** seven at the *Meldahl Dam*, *Clermont*, on 18 Dec. The *Cleveland* CBC total of 13,036 was the highest in 60 years.

**Ruddy Duck:** The *Cuyahoga Falls* CBC found 1215 on 19 Dec. Warmer weather persuaded small numbers to linger into January, but only the boldest stuck it out through the cold period: four at Lorain on 23 Jan (**S. Zadar**), two at Avon Lk PP on 29 Jan (**Zadar**), and 11 on 25 Jan at *Summit* Lk (**C. Holt**).

**Bald Eagle:** Widely reported throughout the period. Nesting was evident in many spots, some new, by mid-Feb. The Ohio Division of Wildlife's January count yielded a record 193 eagles in 29 counties (the previous record was 149 birds in 1998), including 107 adults and 86 immatures. *Ottawa* led with the highest count, with 40 birds, and *Samudsky* was next with 39. Last year 57 nesting pairs produced 72 eaglets, the standing record.

**Northern Harrier:** 148 birds reported other than on CBCs. The Funk bottoms area, *Wayne*, was harrierier than others, with 33 birds on 14 Feb (**D. Bartlett**). A report of 37 on the *Millersburg* CBC of 18 Dec was good news, too.

**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** 45 birds reported other than on CBCs. **R. Harlan** regarded the species as "above expectations" in numbers.

**Cooper's Hawk:** 76 reported beyond CBCs. The *Millersburg* CBC's total of 26 was an all-time Ohio record, according to the folks at *The Bobolink*.

**American Kestrel:** R. Sempier counted 14 at Killdeer on 18 Dec. S. Snyder tallied 21 on New Year's Day along roads in *Holmes* and *Tuscarawas*. The Wilmont CBC had an impressive 111 on 18 Dec.

**Merlin:** A stunning 29 reports beyond those on CBCs. L. Rosche took the prize for reports by an individual, with one on 18 Dec at Wildwood Pk, on 2 Jan a male at Airport Hbr, and on 8 Jan a female there. One was found dead in Galena, *Delaware*, on 17 Dec (P. Schiff). A bird may have stayed a while at Spring Grove Cem in *Hamilton*, with reports from 23 Dec (D. Russell) to at least 16 Jan (H. Armstrong). E. Pierce reported what may be a new *Summit* winter roost; a bird has been seen two years running at a golf course in Cuyahoga Falls. The Hoffmanns remarked the Cleveland CBC tallied more merlins (5) than kestrels (4) this year, marking a new record during the past 60 years, during which the species was reported in only four counts.

**Peregrine Falcon:** By late winter it is not possible to separate local or regional introduced birds from wild ones; the former are certainly in the majority. Twenty-three were reported other than on CBCs. A pair inspected a church steeple in Sandusky on 22 Dec (M. Warren) continuing through the period (S. Young), and one in Nelsonsville, *Athens*, on 25 Feb was interesting (D. St. John), as were birds at the Tri-Valley WA on 17 Dec (J. McCormac) and one in downtown Coshocton on 22 Feb (S. Johnson, *vide* R. Johnson).

**Wild Turkey:** Our usual contributors reported over a thousand birds for the period. Veteran J. Fry said they were "everywhere" in *Hocking*, with separate flocks, for example, of 27, 27, and 11 noted over one January day.

**Northern Bobwhite:** Six were in the MWW on 29 Jan (M. Busam *et al.*), but only one was noted on the Adams CBC of 18 Dec. High count among the 44 seen on CBCs was 16 at Killdeer, where bobwhites, one must admit, are of dubious origin at best.

**Virginia Rail:** Three were discovered at a traditional spot in *Holmes*, a spring-fed wetland, and duly counted on the 18 Dec Millersburg CBC.

**American Coot:** Remained in good numbers with warm temperatures, as ~450 on 1 Jan at Wellington Res, *Lorain* (R. Harlan, S. Wagner). Lingered during the coldest weather, too, even at unusual locations: 12 at Rocky River Pk on 23 Jan (S. Zadar), 20 at Avon Lk PP on 29 Jan (Zadar), 17 at Eastlake PP on 30 Jan (C. Holt), 53 at Lk Rockwell, *Portage*, 5 Feb (L. Rosche), 41 at Lake Buckhorn, *Holmes*, on 9 Feb (S. Snyder). By 2/28 they were back in force as migrants, as ~500 at Metzger Marsh WA (A. J. Hammond).

**Sandhill Crane:** 838 birds reported in December outside of CBCs. Two near Lk Ladue (perhaps those tracked last season) were seen as late as 1 Jan (A. Fjeldstadt). One stayed from 17 Oct to at least the end of the period in Toledo (J. Loughman, m obs), and may have been the one seen at Bayshore PP from time to time, as on 27 Dec (B. Morrison *et al.*). Seventeen birds were reported by the Wooster CBC on 19 Dec. By the last week of Feb, small groups of two to eight birds had been reported at six locations on their way back, the latest of which was three birds over Spring Valley WA on the 29<sup>th</sup> (P. Niehoff).

**Killdeer:** Good Dec numbers seemed inevitable this season, and were topped by 181 at Cowan Lk on the 8<sup>th</sup> (E. Roush) CBC reports totaled 510. Some toughed it out later, as three at Beach City WA (P. Rosenberg) on 2 Jan, five on 24 Jan at Perrysburg (M. Sweeney), and three on the Maumee R on 29 Jan (R. Harlan, S. Wagner). Southerly winds brought many back the last week of Feb, the largest number 15 at Toussaint WA, *Ottawa*, on the 26<sup>th</sup> (V. Fazio).

**Greater Yellowlegs:** Not too surprisingly, reports were of one at the Newton bottoms, *Hamilton*, as late as 26 Dec (N. Keller *et al.*), and one near Millford, *Hamilton*, on the following day (*vide* D. Morse). One had returned to Turtle Ck by 26 Feb (V. Fazio).

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** No Dec reports, as is routine, but two were quite early returnees at Turtle Ck, *Ottawa*, on 26 Feb (V. Fazio).

**Least Sandpiper:** Late migrants concentrated at Buck Ck SP, *Clark*, where D. Overacker found four on 4 Dec, then three on 18 Dec.

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** The last southbound bird was reported on 3 Dec at Lost Ck Res, *Allen* (J. Ruedisuel), and the first northbound at Turtle Ck on 26 Feb (V. Fazio).

**Purple Sandpiper:** Two were seen at Headlands Beach SP on 5 Dec (H. Petruschke). Two were at Conneaut harbor on 9 Jan (J. Pogacnik).

**Common Snipe:** Some snipes overwintered, as would be expected in mild weather, such as two along the Little Miami R on 2 Feb (J. Rakestraw). One on 9 Jan in the GRWA was a beneficiary of the weather (J. Pogacnik). Total of 92 on CBCs. By 27 Feb at Maumee Bay SP (V. Fazio) and the 28<sup>th</sup> at Killdeer (J. Hammond) migrants had returned.

**American Woodcock:** Warm weather induced birds to stay till 12 Dec at Lakeshore MP, *Lake* (J. Pogacnik), till 20 Dec at Salt Fork SP (R. Kolde), and even till 1 Jan in *Geauga* (A. Fondrk). By the last week of Feb, returnees were flooding into the state, with 11 reports between the 23<sup>rd</sup> and the 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Pomarine Jaeger:** J. Pogacnik reported two offshore from *Lake*, on 16 Jan and 23 Jan. T. LePage noted one at Edgewater in Cleveland on 9 Jan. The few jaegers reported this winter in nearby states, even Kentucky (!), were said to be pomarines when identifiable.

**Jaeger sp.:** A bird seen 19 Dec at Buck Ck SP by D. Overacker was very interesting, latest of a wave of pelagic birds well south of Lk Eric; documentation is with the OBRC.

**Laughing Gull:** A first-winter bird on 8 Dec in Lake was very late even for a warm winter, but unequivocally described (S. Zadar, D. Kriska). There are fewer than a dozen other Dec records of this species.

**Franklin's Gull:** Two imm. birds were seen by J. Pogacnik at Pymatuning Res on 11 Dec.

**Little Gull:** One report during the species' mid-winter lull, an adult at Conneaut harbor on 9 Jan (J. Pogacnik).

**Bonaparte's Gull:** One remained in alternate plumage at Eastlake PP on 8 Dec (S. Zadar). Inland, Mosquito Lk hosted good numbers, with ~500 on 7 Dec (D&J Hochadel) and 608 on the 19<sup>th</sup> (C. Babak). Still further south, F. Renfrow estimated 150 at the Meldahl Dam, *Clermont*, on 15 Dec. The Firelands CBC had over 30 thousand on 18 Dec. Just before the harsh weather closed in, the Hires counted 30 at Magee on 16 Jan, and S. Wulkowicz four near S. Bass Isl the same day. Latest seen were at Eastlake PP on 23 Jan, where N. Barber had one and C. Holt three.

**Ring-billed Gull:** On 11 Dec, with rare north winds, titanic numbers of gulls, nearly all this species, were just offshore several miles east and west of Avon Lake. Counting methods collapse in the face of such gatherings, and vantage points were intermittent at best, but one estimate was of 250K to half a million gulls, a goodly proportion of the Lake's population of ring-billeds (J. Hammond *et al.*). C. Holt ventured a guess of "tens of thousands" at Cleveland even on 2 Jan, a day when winds were southerly and the temperature there reached 62°F. To the south, F. Renfrow estimated 3500 at the Meldahl Dam, *Clermont*, on 11 Feb.

**Ring-billed Gull hybrids:** J. Pogacnik and V. Urbanski found an apparent adult ring-billed X laughing gull cross at Lorain on 18 Dec (written details from Pogacnik).

**Thayer's Gull:** A difficult species, with early appearances this winter, and not many. J. Pogacnik had a first-winter bird on 6 Dec at Lakeshore MP and adults there on 1, 16, and 30 Jan. N. Barber found a first-winter bird at Lorain on 23 Dec, relocated by Pogacnik on the 26<sup>th</sup> and again by Barber and I. Kerns the following day.

**Iceland Gull:** December birds were reported at Avon Lake PP on the 12<sup>th</sup> (first-winter, S. Zadar), at Headlands Beach SP on the 27<sup>th</sup> (imm. B. Winger *et al.*), and at Lakeshore MP on the 29<sup>th</sup> (J. Pogacnik). The latter observer had others there on 15 Jan (first-winter) and 19 Jan (adult). Barber found a first-winter at Eastlake PP on 23 Jan, where C. Holt reported one on 9 Feb. The only western basin report was from Bayshore PP on 2 Feb (D. Sanders, D. Burton). S. Wulkowicz had one on 24 and 29 Feb on S. Bass Isl.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** Thirty reports, perhaps of ~20 birds. Most reports were in Dec and Jan in the Lake's central basin, but the Toledo CBC counted a record eight on 19 Dec, and the following inland reports were notable: one near Best Lk in *Geauga* on 1 Jan (**K. Metcalf**), an adult at Oberlin Res. *Lorain*, on 16 Jan (**C. Holt**), and a second-winter bird at Greenlawn Dam in Columbus 14-15 Feb (**A. Goloda**, ph).

**Great Black-backed Gull:** 49 passed by Lakeshore MP on 1 Jan, and 117 on 30 Jan (**J. Pogacnik**). **S. Zadar** tallied 80 at Avon Lake PP and 120 at Rocky River Pk on 23 Jan.

**Glaucous Gull:** A weak showing, but the weather was not propitious for boreal gulls. Ten reports were received, eight of them during the three-week cold period when ice concentrated gull gatherings. The others were of one at Lakeshore MP on 4 Dec (**J. Pogacnik**) and an adult bird at Eastlake PP on 30 Dec (**B. Winger et al.**).

**Black-legged Kittiwake:** Not unknown along the Ohio River in winter, one showed up on 4 Dec at the Meldahl Dam, *Clermont*, for **F. Renfrow**, and remained until at least 24 Jan (**D. Graham**, *vide B. Foppe*).

**Barn Owl:** Two reports came from *Holmes*: one or two birds wintering and helping out the Millersburg CBC of 18 Dec, and a bird seen at another site through 11 Dec, then presumably the same individual on 26 Feb.

**Snowy Owl:** Very scarce again. One was seen at the Bayshore PP on the Toledo CBC of 19 Dec, and was rumored to have remained for some time, though out of sight save for those allowed to enter the area. Only one report last winter, too.

**Long-eared Owl:** **J. Pogacnik** had three in *Trumbull* on 29 Jan. As many as nine were repeatedly scrutinized by m obs at Killdeer throughout the latter part of the period.



Arriving on 4 December 1999, this black-legged kittiwake entertained (or frustrated) numerous observers at the Meldahl Dam, *Clermont Co.*, through 24 January 2000. Photo by Frank Renfrow (10 December 1999).

**Short-eared Owl:** 38 reports totaling about 150 birds were received other than from CBCs. Numbers at The Wilds, where a one-day count of 83 was made last winter, seemed well down by all accounts until **D. St. John**, with permission to visit areas closed to the public, tallied 59 on 21 Feb. Elsewhere, the high count was only eight along Veler Rd in the ONWR on 28 Feb (**R. Harlan, S. Wagner**). An unusual report from overdeveloped *Franklin* came from **S. Borgwald**, who found a bird near the city airport on 4 Feb.

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** Few reported in Ohio vs. elsewhere, where in addition to a record southbound migration they were found wintering well north into Canada. **M. Busam** found one at Gilmore Ponds, *Builer*, on 15 Jan. A bird, perhaps the one found at the same location last winter, spent some days at Sheldon Marsh SNP after its discovery on 21 Jan by **M. Warren**. A grand total of one found on the 62 CBCs, a bird at Mohican discovered by **J. Herman**.

**Belted Kingfisher:** Braving Lake Erie's ice and spray were one on 23 Jan at Eastlake PP (**N. Barber, C. Holt**) and one in *Lake* on 30 Jan (**H. Petruschke**).

**Red-headed Woodpecker:** High CBC count was 36 from Millersburg, *Holmes*.

**Red-bellied Woodpecker:** The Cleveland CBC had 72, the highest count in 60 years.

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** Nine were reported during the depth (narrow as it was) of the winter, with a high count of five at Spring Grove Cemetery, *Hamilton*, on 23 Jan (**M. Busam et al.**). 86 on CBCs, most in the southern counties.

**Downy Woodpecker:** The *Holmes* CBCs had nearly 900 between them.

**Hairy Woodpecker:** The *Holmes* CBCs came up with 30% of the state total.

**Northern Flicker:** 226 were on the Millersburg CBC tally-sheet for 18 Dec. One wintered way up in *Lake*, at **J. Pogacnik**'s feeder.

**Pileated Woodpecker:** Largest CBC numbers where else but *Holmes*, where the Millersburg team counted 103 on 18 Dec.

**Eastern Phoebe:** These birds can survive a cold season by subsisting on winter stoneflies. One at Clear Fork Res, *Richland/Morrow*, on 19 Dec found by **C. Holt** may have retreated south later, as may have one found on the MWV by **N. Cade** on 15 Jan, but two birds were reported during the worst winter weather: **B. Placier** had one in *Hocking* on 23 Jan, and **J. Faulkner** reported another roosting, apparently on its former nest site, at 10°F on 24 Jan in *Perry*.

**Loggerhead Shrike:** Two reports only, but that's good for this species in winter these days. **J. McCormac** found one (ph) in Woodbury WA on 17 Dec, and **L. Powllick** another in *Union* two days later.

**Northern Shrike:** Reports of this species, arising from at least 15 counties, exceeded by ~50% those of last winter's excellent 25+ reports. **L. Rosche** took the honors, with eight birds seen in *Portage, Lake*, and *Geauga* during the period. **J&D Hochadel** found five widely-spaced in *Trumbull*. A bird in Mt. Hope, *Holmes*, apparently had returned for the fifth consecutive year (**L. Yoder, S. Snyder**). Furthest south was a northern reported on 12 Feb at Spring Valley WA, *Greene*, by **R. Kolde et al.** and found as late as the 18<sup>th</sup> by **K. Beal**, who, interestingly enough, had reported a shrike sp. there on 12 Nov.

**Blue Jay:** That significant numbers of our wintering jays are Canadian breeders is suggested by a single-day record count of 121,000 southbound birds at Holiday Beach Migration Observatory in Ontario 25 Sept 1999.

**American Crow:** Growing urban roosts, only gradually being discovered, are the big story for this species. **G. Carey** estimated 60-80,000 headed SE over Cincinnati on 2 Jan. **F. Renfrow** reckoned that the Cincinnati roost had shifted 2 mi NE to I-71 and Victory Parkway this year. **J. Herman** estimated 17,000 at the Mansfield roost for the local 18 Dec CBC.

**Horned Lark:** The species became especially evident during the snowbound weeks when it resorted to roadsides and blown-out ridges in fields. **N. Barber** had ~150 in *Geauga* on 17 Jan, and **P. Wharton** a veritable exaltation of larks—around 400—along E. Miami Rd in *Hamilton* on 27 Jan.

**Tree Swallow:** **R. Harlan** and **S. Wagner** reported their earliest ever of the species on 28 Feb at *Magee*, not a record for the state but significantly early all the same.

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** Breaking previous records for late occurrence by this species—no fewer than four times in a row—were one on 3 Dec at *Maumee Bay SP (D&K Glauser)*, probably the same bird on 5 Dec there (**J. McCoy**), then a bird on 11 Dec on the *Maumee R. Lucas (E. Tramer)*, apparently re-found the following day there by **T. Kemp**. **Tramer** remarked that “the bird stayed mostly over the enriched relatively warm water carrying the effluent of the County Wastewater Treatment Plant...it appeared the bird was feeding on small midges.” The previous late record for Ohio was 15 Nov 1972, and October departures have been normal for the species. This winter, it was reported in Texas as late as 15 Jan.

**Black-capped Chickadee:** The **Romitos** counted 30 along *Ira Rd* in the *CVNRA* on 6 Dec. The species invaded the south this season—far enough to give Kentucky a new state record, and where birds remain in April—and the maximum count of invaders here was eight in *Sugarcreek, Holmes*, on 11 Dec (**E. Schlabach**).

**Tufted Titmouse:** A count of 111 was a new record for the *Toledo CBC*.

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** Autumn’s huge movement of this species eventually involved areas to our south, so record Ohio numbers were not achieved. As the period wore on, however, substantial numbers of nuthatches devoted themselves to reliable food sources such as feeders statewide. High counts continued at *Spring Grove Cemetery in Hamilton*, as 20 on 19 Dec (**N. Cade**), and 15 on 9 Jan (**M. Busam**), while in *Trumbull D. Hochadel* called them “as common as I can ever recall.” Some ratios of numbers of r-b nuthatches per CBC over recent winters: 92/93—2.48; 93/94—5.92; 94/95—1.30; 95/96—6.62; 96/97—0.91; 98/99—1.18; and this winter 6.37.

**Brown Creeper:** High count at a single site was 7 at *Ottawa* by the **Romitos** on 2 Jan. The *CBC* total was 379 statewide.

**Carolina Wren:** Some ratios of *Carolina wrens* per *CBC* over some recent winters: 93/94—40.21; 94/95—18.97; 95/96—24.49; 96/97—26.98; 98/99—44.73; and this winter 28.91.

**Marsh Wren:** The *N. Lorain CBC* found one on 18 Dec, and the *Toledo CBC* one on the following day.

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** High count three in *Athens* 1 Jan (**D. St. John**). A late bird was detected at *Headlands Beach SP* on 11 Dec (**K. Metcalf**). Twenty-one were found statewide on the *CBCs*.

**Eastern Bluebird:** An excellent year, with over five thousand statewide on *CBCs*.

**Hermit Thrush:** Reports from 11 southern counties, with a high count of seven at *Old Man’s Cave SP, Hocking*, on 8 Jan (**D. St. John**). *CBC* counts were way down; the *Lk Erie Islands CBC* had 30 last winter in traditional haunts, and only one this time.

**American Robin:** Very good numbers persisted through the cold weeks. The *Cincinnati CBC* had 8234 on 27 Dec, and **L. Rosche** and **R. Hannikman** found 1000+ in the dunes (!) at *Headlands Beach SP* on 29 Jan.

**Gray Catbird:** Surprisingly few reports of this half-hardy species during a warm winter; one was found at *Killdeer* on 30 Jan by **T. Vince**. Only four total from the *CBCs*, three of them from the *Wilmot* count.

**Northern Mockingbird:** Gradually regaining ground to the north, encouraged by warm winters. The editor’s backyard bird first broke into full song on 24 Feb, nearly a month earlier than last year. Some selected novel sightings: four at *Lake View Cemetery, Cleveland*, on 18 Dec (**D&J Hoffmann**), one on 18 Dec at *Eastlake PP (L. Rosche)*, and one in downtown *Lorain* on 9 Jan (**R. Harlan, S. Wagner**). The *Cleveland CBC* found nine mockingbirds, their highest count over the past 60 years.

**Brown Thrasher:** One was in *Eastlake* on 18 Dec (**L. Rosche**). A bird was reported at the feeder of **C. Ignasiak** in *Cleveland* on 26 and 27 Jan (*vide Rosche*), then again during cold weather in Feb. One was described from near *Sugarcreek, Holmes*, on 29 Jan (**L. Schlabach**).

**European Starling:** **F. Renfrow** estimated 100,000 along I-71 in *Cincinnati* on 7 Jan.

**American Pipit:** Small numbers of birds showed up well past their usual schedule. Later in Dec were six at *Spring Valley WA* on the 16<sup>th</sup> (**J. Rakestraw**) and four on *Kelley’s Is* on the 19<sup>th</sup> (**T. Bartlett**). The *Wilmot CBC* reported 200 on 18 Dec. Unusual were seven January birds: one at *Lorain* on the 8<sup>th</sup> (**L. Aldrich**), 11 at *Pleasant Hill Lk, Ashland/Richland*, on the 14<sup>th</sup> (**J. Herman**), one on the 24<sup>th</sup> at *Perrysburg, Lucas (M. Sweeney)*, and there on the 29<sup>th</sup> (**R. Harlan, S. Wagner**), then four on the 29<sup>th</sup> in *Butler (M. Busam et al.)*. Returns were on schedule, with eight at *Maumee Bay SP* on 27 Feb (**V. Fazio**) and one at *Ottawa* on the 28<sup>th</sup> (**R. Harlan, S. Wagner**).

**Bohemian Waxwing:** **K. Metcalf** picked one out of a flock of cedar waxwings at *N. Chagrin MP* on 12 Dec, but regrettably it was not rediscovered, nor were others reported in the state, despite massive incursions in *New England* and the *Upper Midwest* this winter. Documentation is with the *OBRC*.

**Cedar Waxwing:** Good numbers this season. Larger flocks included 716 on the 18 Dec *Millersburg CBC*, 547 on the *Grand Rapids-Waterloo CBC* on 26 Dec, ~300 in *Tuscarawas* on 28 Dec (**L. Rosche**), 50 on 22 Jan at *Secrest Arboretum, Wayne (L. Yoder)*, ~200 in *Perry* on 24 Jan (**J. Faulkner**), ~200 south of *Medina* 29 Jan (**G. DeMars**), and ~100 in the *CVNRA* on 21 Feb (**T&MA Romito**).

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** In this unusually warm winter, reports of this species are not unthinkable. **N. Cade** reported one at *Spring Grove Cemetery* on 1 Jan, but still more unusual was another at *Old Woman Creek SNP, Erie*, on 20 Jan (**P. Lozano**).

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** About a hundred birds reported other than on *CBCs*, significantly including **D. St. John**’s high count of 56 in the *Zaleski SF, Vinton*, on 4 Jan. There were 645 statewide on the *CBCs*.

**Pine Warbler:** One was found and documented by **R. Miller** for the *Ragersville CBC, Holmes*, on 28 Dec.

**Palm Warbler:** The diligent birders of the *Ragersville CBC* found and documented two palm warblers on 28 Dec, one by **R. Schlabach** and one by **L. Schlabach**.

**Common Yellowthroat:** A good find was a female/imm at *Metzger Marsh WA* on 13 Dec (**R. Harlan, S. Wagner**).

**Eastern Towhee:** More northerly reports included one 12 Dec in *Hocking (J. Fry)*, one 5 Jan at *Killdeer (J&L Day)*, and one on 20 Jan at *Beach City WA (W.P. Rosenberry)*. **B. Hardesty** had a bird in her *Findlay yard* 13 and 25 Jan, and the **Romitos** had two in the *CVNRA* on 13 Feb.

**American Tree Sparrow:** Big counts included 300+ in *Shalersville Twp, Portage*, by **L. Rosche** on 19 Feb, and 500+ at *Killdeer* on 26 Feb by **B. Royse**.

**Chipping Sparrow:** Reports spanned the period. **S. Landes** had a bird frequenting his feeder in *Franklin* on 6 Dec, the *Toledo CBC* discovered a bird in *Woodlawn Cemetery* on 19 Dec, and **R. Koldt** reported one in *Hamilton* on 28 Jan.

**Field Sparrow:** Not so uncommon to the south usually (witness 18 reported by **D. St. John** from the *Zaleski SF, Vinton*, on 4 Jan), we had unusual numbers in the north. **R. Harlan** and **S. Wagner** found four at *Silver Lk MP, Marion*, on 8 Jan, and **L. Rosche** three at *Lk George, Portage*, on the following day. **J. Pogaenik** had one at the *GRWA* on 29 Jan. **L. Deininger** found birds on 25 and 29 Jan in *Coshocton*. Ten found by **Rosche** on 19 Feb in *Shalersville Twp, Portage*, made up the high count.

**Vesper Sparrow:** Unexpected was one videotaped by **L. Rosche** in *Shalersville Twp* on 19 Feb, overwintering is a more likely explanation in this instance than premature movement north. Only one *CBC* bird, from the 2 Jan *Kingston* count.



**Savannah Sparrow:** Ohio appeared to be a winter vacation spot for savannahs. Ten reports, seven of them in the state's northern half, were received other than from CBCs. Of two found in *Holmes* on 19 Dec and following days, L. Yoder remarked that they "fed on cracked corn put out for horned larks during cold snowy period; disappeared when weather moderated." Perhaps these birds retreated south, but one on 3 Feb in Wadsworth (J. Wert, *fide* L. Rosche) apparently toughed it out for a most unusual record. Another extraordinary find was 12 birds near Ragersville on 19 Jan (R. Schlabach), some of over 50 reported in *Holmes* during the period.

**Fox Sparrow:** Their early spring and late fall appearances inspire confidence they can survive an Ohio winter, and the one just past must have been a piece of cake. Thirty-two reports, other than from CBCs, suggest this. M. Busam called them "almost regular" at Gilmore Ponds, citing three to four birds present during the coldest period, between 15 Jan and 6 Feb. Northerly mid-winter reports included one in Sagamore Hills 12 Dec (D&A Chasar), one on 8 Jan at Lorain (S. Landes) and another 22 Jan at Sheldon Marsh SNP (P. Lozano).

**Song Sparrow:** On 2 Jan, the Romitos kept track of finds at Ottawa totaling 33 birds. Over seven thousand reported from the CBCs.

**Swamp Sparrow:** Many reports. Traditionally scarcest in the NE quadrant, 26 birds were reported there, with 12 at Lorain on 20 Feb (S. Zadar), seven in the CVNRA on 3 Jan (T&MA Romito), and three at Lk George, *Portage*, on 3 Jan (L. Rosche). Highest CBC count was 195 at ONWR on 2 Jan.

**White-throated Sparrow:** Mostly single-digit reports for this hardy species, other than CBC compilations. The Romitos did count 15 along Ira Rd in the CVNRA on 21 Feb. CBC numbers were down about a third from last year's.

**Harris's Sparrow:** J. Beechy carefully observed a short stay by one in Saltillo, *Holmes*, on 9 Jan. Documentation is with the OBR.

**White-crowned Sparrow:** Our other regular *Zonotrichia* sparrow seemed inexplicably scarce as well, judging by reports. Though L. Rosche found 30 in *Mahoning* on 20 Dec, most observers reported only handfuls at best, and J. Fry reported no white-crowns or white-throats at his well-stocked and famously bird-friendly rural *Hocking* feeders during the period. This said, the CBC numbers were down only a bit from last year's, much aided as they were by a record-setting 1070 from the Millersburg team.

**Dark-eyed Junco:** Normal numbers present. D. St. John counted 200+ along five to six miles of SR 83 in *Morgan* on 21 Jan, and L. Rosche 120+ in Shalersville 1wp on 19 Feb. Over 15 thousand CBC reports.

**Lapland Longspur:** Well-distributed in glaciated Ohio, and more easily discovered during snowbound periods, large concentrations appeared only with staging migrants in late Feb, as 126 in *Marion* on the 26<sup>th</sup> (D. St. John), 2100 over MBSP on the 27<sup>th</sup> (V. Fazio), and ~750 near Killdeer on the 29<sup>th</sup> (B. Royle). The CBCs found only 23 statewide.

**Snow Bunting:** Plentiful and widely reported. Many reported from the northern counties, with 50+ in a flock in *Cuyahoga* 17 Jan (N. Barber) and a flock of ~500 persisting through Jan just west of Antwerp, *Paulding* (D&M Dunakin). The ONWRC had 256 on 5 Dec, ~600 on 2 Jan, and 268 on 6 Feb. Smaller numbers well to the south included two or more near Oxford on 24 Jan (D. Russell), one in *Butler* 29 Jan (M. Busam *et al.*) and three in Hueston Wds SP on 5 Feb (N. Cade).

**Indigo Bunting:** A first February record for Ohio was set by an apparent female, well described, that frequented the feeder of B. Royle in Columbus on 17 and 18 Feb and 27 Feb. By April it became clear that the bird was probably a male, as blue feathering emerged in mid-month. Closest record was one seen in Cincinnati on 29 Jan 1960 by Worth Randle. Royle's bird remained as of this writing, 19 April.

**Dickcissel:** M. Barkman found one near New Bedford, *Coshocton*, on 19 Dec and was probably the same individual which was tallied on the Ragersville CBC on 28 Dec. This bird remained through the end of the period.

**Red-winged Blackbird:** Widely wintering, usually in small numbers, though L. Yoder reported 350-400 on 14 Jan in *Holmes*, and the ONWRC 751 on 6 Feb. By 22 Feb large flocks—such as ~10,000 seen by S. Snyder in *Wayne*—were returning.

**Eastern Meadowlark:** D. Best reported four from *Geauga* on 1 Jan, where wintering meadowlarks can be scarce. High count for single occasions was 30+ on The Wilds, *Muskingum*, on 25 Feb (J. Larson), which may well include spring migrants.

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Two came to feeders at Pearson MP, *Lucas*, on 1 Feb (B. Place). One was near Stange Rd in *Lucas* on 27 Feb close to the probable nesting sites of last year (S. Stockford). A male was seen well with a flock of two to three thousand other blackbirds in *Holmes* on 28 Feb (A. Erb).

**Rusty Blackbird:** Reports after mid-Jan were surprisingly numerous: ~300 in *Holmes* on 15 Jan (L. Yoder); one at Mosquito Lk WA on 19 Jan (C. Babyak); one on 23 Jan, two on the 29<sup>th</sup>, and three on the 30<sup>th</sup> at Buck Ck SP (D. Overacker); one at Gilmore Ponds, *Butler*, on the 30<sup>th</sup> (M. Busam); and six near Ottawa on 2 Feb (D. Sanders, D. Burton). By 26 Feb, V. Fazio observed ~1400 at Magee.

**Brewer's Blackbird:** A nice find was 15 in Athens on 18 Dec (A. Barber). One appeared at a feeder in *Holmes* on several days near 25 Jan (T. Yoder).

**Common Grackle:** Seen throughout the period, generally in smaller numbers in the north and larger ones to the south. ~300 were counted by the ONWRC on 6 Feb. S. Snyder witnessed a spring migrant flock in *Wayne* on 22 Feb, estimating it a ~90,000 strong; a lot of birds, but dwarfed by counts of ~200,000 made in the same county up to 20 Dec (M. Weaver); where they spent the meantime remains a mystery.

**Purple Finch:** Most reports in Dec and early Jan, with larger numbers in the southwest. On CBCs, 322 statewide were dominated by 118 in *Adams*. Highest count in the northeast was five on 9 Jan at Lk George, *Portage* (L. Rosche). B. Stanley had 30 at East Fork SP, *Clermont*, on 5 Dec. J. Fry had the most consistent counts, made at his *Hocking* feeders; here, with a high count of eight, the species appeared on six days in Dec beginning on the 19<sup>th</sup>, 18 days in Jan, and 21 days in Feb.

**Red Crossbill:** Generally scarce and flighty. All reports: a small flock at Woodlawn Cem in Toledo reached an early peak of four birds on 3 Dec (G. Links). Three in Spring Grove Cemetery, *Hamilton*, on 16 Jan (D. Styer) remained on the 27<sup>th</sup> (N. Cade). In less marmoreal settings, J. Pogacnik had three at Lakeshore MP, *Lake*, on 23 Jan. A. Raber found a female in *Holmes* on 9 Dec. J. Fry had fairly faithful birds at his *Hocking* feeders on 24, 26, and 31 Jan, and on 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, and 19 Feb, with a high count of 13 on 18 Feb.

**White-winged Crossbill:** A good incursion. Numbers were never large (high count was 30+ at Woodlawn Cem in Toledo, by D. Linzell *et al.* on 11 Dec), the species apparently having overshoot Ohio to show up in places like Dallas, TX, and southernmost Virginia this winter. The Woodlawn flock was noted by J. McCoy on 5 Dec through a single female, and a male seen there on 29 Jan led R. Harlan to observe that it seemed to be acting territorial. This species has nested in all months of the year in its normal range. Spring Grove Cemetery had a flock numbered at 16 on 20 Dec (D. Brinkman, *ph*) and but one on 16 Feb (D. Russell). A Columbus cemetery, Green Lawn, got into the act with three beginning on 26 Dec (R. Cressman), later repeatedly seen or repeatedly missed by m obs. Other small flocks were more fickle, including a male at an Athens feeder on 13 Dec (A. Wells) (the last reported here, a specimen, was 20 Dec 1965), one in *Clark* on 8 Jan (D. Overacker), ~15 at hemlocks in Columbus on 27 Jan (B. Conlon), and four more on 31 Jan on the OSU campus (D. Horn). Several remained on 13 Apr in Cleveland Hts (K. Metcalf). Wild food favorites were most often hemlock cones, with sweetgum balls a distant second.

**Common Redpoll:** Some big flocks in the northern part of the state appeared, such as 212 in *Ashabula* on 12 Dec (J. Pogacnik) and ~150 at Eastlake PP on 9 Dec (D. Sanders, D. Burton). The species reached Oklahoma by Jan this year, so reports from further south in Ohio were not surprising, as one in Westerville, *Franklin*, on 17 Feb (D. Linzell), one at Lk Hope SP, *Vinton*, on 25 Jan (D. St. John), and even at East Fork SP, *Clermont*, on 5 Dec (B. Stanley). On 26 Feb at Lakeshore MP, *Lake*, J. Pogacnik noticed his first redpolls since Jan, three of them, one in full song; he was still seeing two at his feeder on 9 Apr.

**Pine Siskin:** E. Tramer justly described its abundance thus: "present in moderate numbers. Not a huge irruption year, but a nice showing." Present across the northern tier of counties (except apparently in Lake, where Pogacnik's oft-visited feeders featured no siskins this winter), with high count of ~75 at Woodlawn Cem. Toledo, on 11 Dec (D. Linzell *et al.*), but relatively few reached the south, as three on 3 Dec in Clinton (L. Gara). J. Fry had siskins at his Hocking feeders each day from 20 Oct into March.

**Evening Grosbeak:** Not numerous, and many of the reports from points south. Mohican SP was the most reliable spot, where B&A Toneff found three on 29 Dec, and others found birds through 23 Feb (S. Snyder, L. Yoder), with a high count of 15 on 6 Feb (D. Sanders). Eleven were seen by the Beaver Valley CBC team on 18 Dec. The other reports spanned a ten-day period during the coldest part of the season: a female at a Vinton feeder on 25 Jan (D. St. John), two in Zaleski SF on 27 Jan (St. John), eight for several days in Hocking beginning 30 Jan (B. Hatfield), and two in Summit on 4 Feb (B. Kaplan).

#### EXOTICS:

**Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*:** On 22 Dec two unidentified swans were reported at the Camp Dennison gravel pits, Hamilton, by W. Hull. On 22 Jan, Y. Mohlman identified a swan at this location as this species, and subsequently sent documentation to the OBRC. Other local birders studied the bird closely, and were unable to find signs of captivity; they and others continued research into this individual and the species' occurrence in North America. The species has been accepted by the records committees of California, Oregon, and Quebec, based on appearances in these locations. On 6 Feb the bird had disappeared, but was refound in a pond in Milford (H. Armstrong, ph). Most recently, it—or a bird eerily like it—appeared in a pond in SW Warren (J. Lehman). Other whoopers have been reported in the region in Iowa (two occasions), N. Dakota, and Indiana over the past six months. Lehman reported on 3 Mar that the latest thinking is that some or all of these birds are those that reportedly escaped from a suburb of Rockford, Illinois, where five cygnets were born to captive parents in 1998. Nevertheless, the bird was widely admired and profitably studied. It was at one point in time possible to see five species of swans in the Cincinnati area this winter, only one of them—tundra swan—probably present at a time and place it should have been.



After leaving the Camp Dennison gravel pits, these two swans (trumpeter on left, whooper on right) reappeared in a pond near Milford on 6 February 2000. Photo by Hank Armstrong.

**CORRIGENDA:** In the Autumn 1999 issue, a 3 October report of yellow-throated warbler is incorrect; this sighting involved a common yellowthroat, and is hence perhaps of less interest. Inattentive editors would make fewer mistakes of this sort, as Bob Roysce pointed out, if we used the less ambiguous and more appropriate name "Sycamore warbler" for the former. In the same issue, an 8 Aug date for a pine siskin at a Trumbull feeder was in error; the actual date was a more mundane 8 Oct. In our omnibus issue for last winter, recently sent to subscribers, the report of 650 ruddy ducks at Bresler Res and 350 at Metzger Res (both *Allen*) on 12 Feb 1999 is erroneous; the date should be 12 Dec 1999.

**CONTRIBUTORS:** Lynn Aldrich, Chuck Anderson, Matt Anderson, Kiley Andre, Lynda Andrews, Hank Armstrong, Carole Babyak, Zac Baker, Andy Barber, Nick Barber, Mosse Barkman, Tom Bartlett, Eric Baumgardner, Kathy Beal, Chris Bedel, Jacob Beechey, Joe Bens, Byron Berger, Dan Best, Adam Blank, Elmer Benkamp, Steven Borgwald, Bill Bosstic, Richard Bradley, Judy Bradt-Barnhart, Victoria Brannen, David A. Brinkman, Lori Brumbaugh, Nancy Brundage, Don Burlett, Don Burton, Mike Busam, Mary Butts, Neill Cade, Craig Caldwell, Granville Carey, Ann Chasar, Dwight Chasar, Bob Conlon, Bill Creasey, Rich Cressman, Donna Daniel, Leo Deminger, Gordon DeMars, Jen Dennison, Jon Diller, David Dister, Adam Duff, Doug Dunakin, Micki Dunakin, Eric Durbin, Arlen Erb, Bob Faber, Joe Faulkner, Duane Ferris, Bob Finkelstein, Anders Fjelstad, Bob Foppe, Howard Fradkin, August Froehlich, Larry Gara, Phil Gingrich, Tami Gingrich, Delores Glauser, Kent Glauser, Adam Goloda, Laura Gooch, Jeff Grabmeier, Frank Greenland, David Hadine, Stan Hadine, Joe Hammond, Betty Hardesty, Rob Harlan, Stephen Harvey, Becky Hatfield, Jim Haw, Jim Helfrich, Helen Hendrickson, John Herman, Tom Hisson, Dave Hochadel, Judy Hochadel, Dick Hoffman, Jean Hoffman, Dave Horn, Linda Houshower, William Hull, Robert Johnson, Andy Troyer, Scott Johnson, Cece Johnston, Bill Jones, Barb Kaplan, Tom Kemp, Isaac Kerns, Gerry Klug, Kurt Knebusch, Ron Kolde, Jeff Kraus, Marian Kraus, Mary Krejci, David Kriska, Steve Landes, Jason Larson, Bill Leaman, Jay Lehman, Tom LePage, Jim Lesser, Greg Links, Doreene Linzell, Jeff Loughman, Paula Lozano, Barbara Lund, Dottie Mathiot, Keith McClintock, Jim McCormac, Jeff McCoy, Robert McCullough, Brian McGuire, Joe McMahon, Kevin Metcalf, Lee Miller, Pete Miller, Roy Miller, Jared Mizamin, Yvonne Mohlman, Scott Moody, Ben Morrison, Donald Morse, Patti Niehoff, John Oros, Art Osborn, Doug Overacker, Karl Overman, Haans Petruschke, Lester Peyton, Brad Phillips, Ed Pierce, Bernie Place, Bob Placier, John Pogacnik, Len Powlick, Allen Raber, John Rakestraw, Frank Renfrow, Jim Rettig, Grant Rettig, Steve Richards, Richard Rickard, Craig Rieker, William Rinehart, Mary Anne Romito, Tom Romito, Larry Rosche, William P. Rosenberry, Ed Roush, Bob Roysce, Jonathon Ruedisueli, David Russell, Dave St. John, Brian Sampson, Dan Sanders, Kevin Schieltz, Regina Schieltz, Paul Schiff, Ed Schlabach, Leroy Schlabach, Robert Schlabach, Ron Sempier, Lois Shadix, Rod Sharpnack, Jon Shrader, Darlene Sillick, Mark Skinner, Su Snyder, Brad Sparks, Terry Sponseller, Bill Stanley, Mark Stephens, Steve Stockford, Dave Styer, Mike Sweeney, Joe Szczerbiak, Karin Tanquist, Rob Thorn, Ann Toneff, Bill Toneff, Elliot Tramer, Casey Tucker, Vince Urbanski, T. J. Vince, Joe Vogerl, Sandy Wagner, Mary Warren, Arvin Wells, Jeff Wert, Bill Whan, Pete Whan, Paul Wharton, John Wilson, Ben Winger, Stan Wulkowicz, John Yochum, Leroy Yoder, Titus Yoder, Sheryl Young, Sean Zadar, Marian Zehnder, Karen Zeleznik, Phil Zito. *The Ohio Cardinal* also received invaluable assistance and information from the editors of *The Bobolink* and *The Cleveland Bird Calendar*, the Northwest Ohio Rare Bird Alert, and online resources managed by Victor Fazio III.

## Further Afield by Rob Harlan

We now rejoin our long adventure to determine Ohio's Bird of the Century. In our previous episode:

*In March 1900 a Pike County boy shot the last passenger pigeon ever taken in the wild. It had been eating the boy's corn. In a unique expression of "season's greetings," a Columbus-area farmer shot Ohio's only recorded Harris's hawk during late December 1917. It had been harassing his poultry. In May 1929, a vagabond Leach's storm-petrel somehow found its way to Dayton. Apparently engrossed in seeing the sights, it flew headlong into an immovable object and didn't get up in the morning. After an exhausting trans-Atlantic flight in November 1935, a Eurasian woodcock soon found itself in a Geauga County cook-pot. And in October 1947, Milton B. Trautman, a notorious scientific collector of birds, saw a great gray owl in Ottawa County but didn't shoot it.*

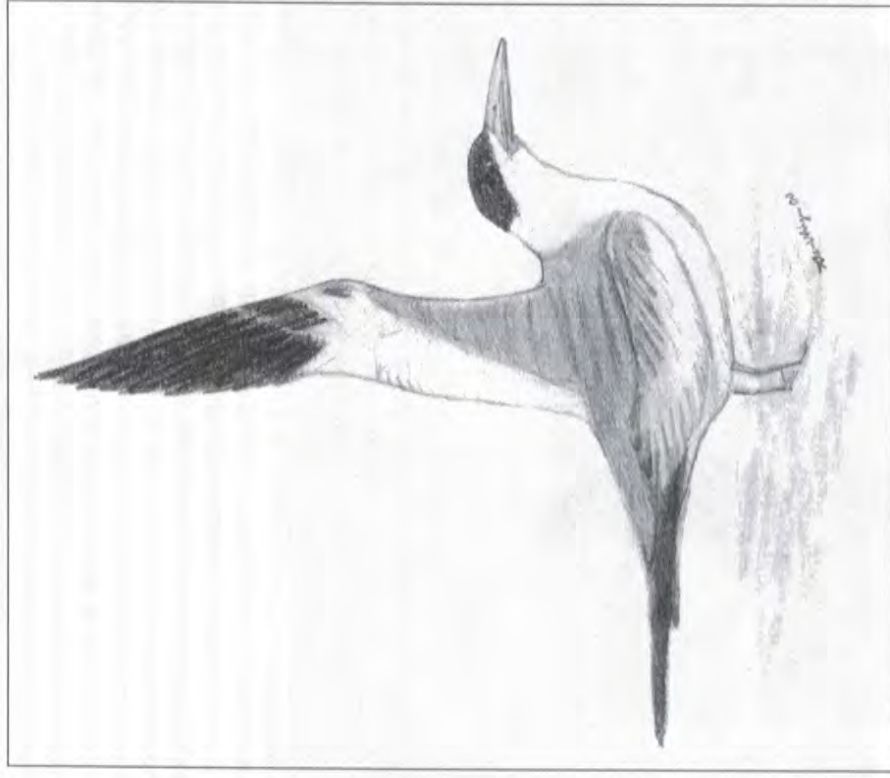
Considering the grim record outlined above, I'm glad I wasn't a rare bird in Ohio during the first half of the twentieth century. But perhaps Dr. Trautman's hesitance to pull the trigger on that owl was a portent of more positive things to come. Indeed, none of the birds in the accounts that follow ended belly-up in a museum tray. While I have no doubt that much of what we know today has come only with the study of museum specimens, I also believe there is much to be learned from the living bird, and much satisfaction and excitement as well. Read on.

### 1950-59

*The year is 1950. Harry S. Truman is our 33<sup>rd</sup> President. North Korea invades South Korea on 25 June 1950. With the Korean armistice of 27 July 1953, America enters a period of strong economic growth and the rise of suburbia. Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama bus on 1 December 1955. On 21 April 1956, "Heartbreak Hotel" becomes Elvis Presley's first single (of 17) to reach #1 on Billboard magazine's Hot 100 chart. The Soviet Union launches Sputnik on 4 October 1957. In 1959, Alaska and Hawaii become our 49<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> states.*

Somehow it just doesn't seem right that our most over-the-top outlandish bird ever came from a decade perhaps best remembered for its tranquil equanimity. In fact, I'd guess that the majority of Ohio birders (*Cardinal* readers excepted, of course) have never even heard of the species in question. A mostly resident species that nests primarily along the sandy shorelines of South American rivers and lakes, it has nevertheless somehow also found its way to Illinois in 1949 and New Jersey in 1988. Why, of course—we're speaking of large-billed tern. Put yourself in the shoes of Vincent P. McLaughlin and his two compatriots, who together were watching a migration of terns at Evans Lake, just south of Youngstown, on 29 May 1954. They noted three terns together on a sandbar—a Caspian, a common, and a mystery. The third tern was intermediate in size, with yellow legs, a dark back and cap, and, most tellingly, an out-of-proportion "top-heavy" yellow bill. Although none of the observers recognized the species, McLaughlin had the presence of mind to sketch the bird on the spot. He subsequently sent the sketch to Kenneth C. Parkes at the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh, who identified the bird as the fairly unmistakable large-billed tern *Phaetusa simplex*.

As far as we know, the bird was never seen again. Interestingly, the 1988 New Jersey bird was discovered 30 May, while the Ohio bird of 1954 was found just a day earlier on the calendar, on 29 May. Do I sense a pattern? Well, maybe not, but we do at least have a bird with a total score of 11 points (see our ranking scale in the last issue, 23 (1):22 & 27), with three points for being our only state record, one point for having only written (or, in this case, sketched) details, two points for having been seen only by the original small party, and five points according to the American Birding Association's rarity code scale.



Large-billed Tern  
by Ben Winger

The year is 1960. Dwight D. Eisenhower is our 34<sup>th</sup> President, followed in January 1961 by John F. Kennedy. The Cuban missile crisis is touched off on 22 October 1962. Dr. Martin Luther King gives his "I have a dream" speech in Washington 28 August 1963. On 1 February 1964, "I Want to Hold Your Hand" propels the Beatles to the #1 spot on the Billboard Hot 100 chart for the first time, a feat they were to repeat 17 more times during the sixties. North Viet Nam attacks two American destroyers 2 August 1964, plunging the US into war for the remainder of the decade. Dr. King is assassinated in Memphis 4 April 1968. Neil Armstrong becomes the first human to walk on the moon 20 July 1969.

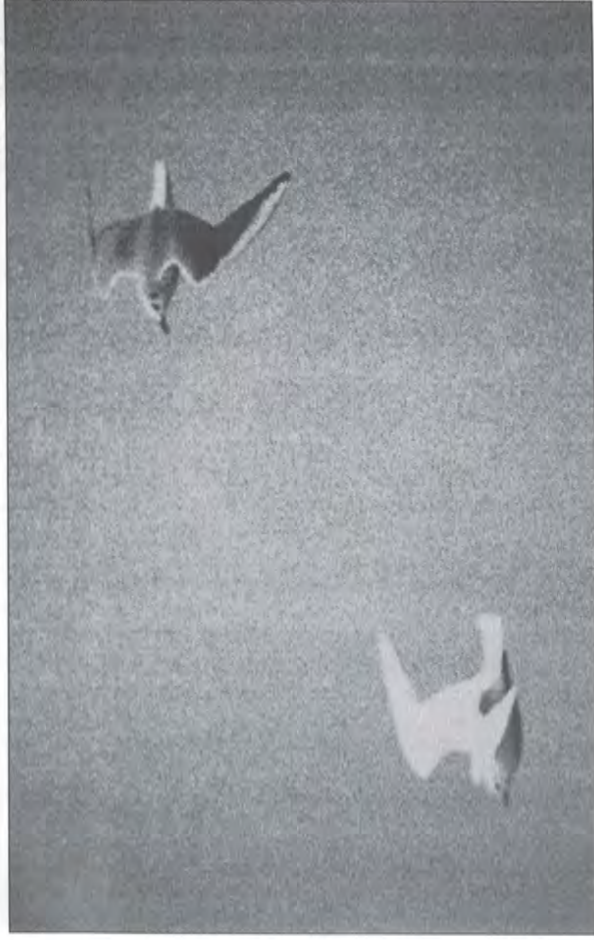
The so-called "Red Menace" seemed omnipresent in the 1960s, whether in Cuba, Southeast Asia, China, or the Soviet Union. Communist advances were a very tangible concern. In fact, one Siberian outlander, a red-necked stint, even made it as far as Ash-tabula County. On 21 July 1962, Jon Ahlquist noticed a small peep with a decidedly reddish head and neck feeding along the Walnut Beach mudflat in the company of semipalmated and least sandpipers. But in keeping with the politically charged mood of the day, the stint's North American congeners gave it the proverbial cold shoulder, frequently chasing and pecking at it, as if they somehow knew that it didn't belong. And when the flock was briefly flushed, the stint flew alone. But at least no one shot at it, which was a step in the right direction. Instead, Ahlquist took diagnostic photos and shared the bird with several other birders that day and the next, establishing this sighting as the first US record outside Alaska. Although the species has since proven to be a regular vagrant, especially along our Atlantic coast, an inland sighting is still truly extraordinary. We'll rank this bird with a total score of 12 points, based on three points for being our only record, two for having diagnostic photos taken, three for being widely viewed, and four according to the ABA rarity code.



This red-necked stint, observed on 21-22 July 1962 at Walnut Beach, Ashtabula Co., provided the US with its first record outside of Alaska. Needless to say, it was Ohio's first and has been dubbed the bird of the 1960s. Photo by Jon Ahlquist.

The year is 1970. Richard M. Nixon is our 37<sup>th</sup> President. Four Kent State University students are shot by National Guardsmen 4 May 1970 during a protest over the war in southeast Asia. Five men break into the Watergate office complex in Washington 17 June 1972. President Nixon resigns 9 August 1975. South Viet Nam formally surrenders 30 April 1975. The US celebrates its Bicentennial 4 July 1976. The Three Mile Island nuclear plant in Middletown, Pennsylvania suffers a partial meltdown 28 March 1979.

Speaking of meltdowns, Jim Hoffman probably had one when he discovered an adult ivory gull along the Cleveland lakefront 17 December 1975. Apparently driven by inclement weather to the refuge of the Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company's hot water outlet, the bird remained through 19 December to be seen by many. Diagnostic photos were obtained, and the bird sometimes cavorted as close as 15 feet to observers, allowing study of its black legs and eyes, its short, thick, gray bill tipped with yellow, and its all-white plumage. A nice week-before-Christmas present, I'd say. With records in about 15 of the lower 48 states, this sighting represents our only confirmed visit by this denizen of the Arctic pack-ice, and grades out with a total score of 11 points, with three for being the only state record, two for being captured in diagnostic photos, three for being widely viewed, and three according to the ABA rarity code.



Jim Hoffman discovered this adult ivory gull on 17 December 1975 at the Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company's hot water outlet. It remained until 19 December, to the delight of numerous observers, and was photographed by Jean Hoffman (with a Bonaparte's gull nearby). This is Ohio's only record and, of course, the bird of the 1970s.

The year is 1980. Jimmy Carter is our 39<sup>th</sup> President. Sixty-three Americans are taken hostage at the American embassy in Tehran 4 November 1980. Minutes after Ronald Reagan is sworn in as our 40<sup>th</sup> President, the hostages are released after 444 days in captivity. The space shuttle Columbia, the world's first reusable spacecraft, is sent into orbit 12 April 1981. The space shuttle Challenger explodes during lift-off 28 January 1986, killing all seven aboard. The Soviet Union teeters on the brink of collapse, and the Berlin Wall falls in November 1989.

Clearly in an effort to escape the political fragmentation in Eurasia, Ohio's only brambling sought sanctuary at the Bath feeders of Helen and Horace Harger in Summit County on 31 March 1987, reappearing irregularly through 7 April. This beautiful male was seen by many of the faithful over the course of its stay, and was diagnostically photographed as well. Our thanks go to Larry Rosche for rectifying its initial identification as a sunflower-seed-snarfing, late-March bay-breasted warbler, which admittedly would have been interesting as well. No disrespect is meant to the well-meaning Hargers, who graciously withstood a week's onslaught of onlookers at their home, keeping their feeders constantly primed for action. Looking back, it was well worth the 13 hours of standing in the snow, waiting for the bird to reappear. It did, and we all went home happy. Frozen, but happy. This Eurasian finch has now been identified in about 20 states, but only once in Ohio, and has earned a total score of 12 points, with three points for being the only state record, two for being diagnostically photographed, three for being widely observed, and four according to the ABA rarity code.



Taking advantage of well-stocked feeders, this brambling was viewed by many during its visit in Bath, Summit Co., from 31 March to 7 April 1987. Not only is it Ohio's only record, it is the bird of the 1980s as well. Photo by Larry Rosche.

The year is 1990. George Bush is our 41<sup>st</sup> President. Iraq invades Kuwait on 2 August 1990. Operation Desert Storm forces Iraq to surrender 27 February 1991. The disintegration of the Soviet Union begins in earnest in August 1991. O.J. Simpson is found not guilty of murder 3 October 1995. Later that month, Atlanta Braves outfielder David Justice hits a home run to defeat the Cleveland Indians in the 1995 World Series, leaving Robert N. Harlan a broken, bitter shell of a man. President Clinton misbehaves. At the close of 1999, the world's human population is estimated at 6 billion, up from 1.6 billion in 1900.

As you can tell, it turned out to be a rather uneventful decade. But not for Ohio birders, however, as this was the only ten-year span that failed to produce a single clear-cut Bird of the Decade. Two sightings earned 12 points, an Adams County plover and a Seneca County alcid. Why a northern lapwing would choose to fly from Eurasia only to land in a winter wheat field near Panhandle, Ohio on 29 December 1994 is beyond me. Birds sometimes do silly things, such as leaving for good some twenty minutes before Tom LePage and I could complete our four-hour drive from Cleveland to Panhandle the next morning. *C'est la vie*. Nonetheless, it was widely seen, as in addition to its discoverer Martin McAllister at least 20 more people did observe it during its two-day stay. Surprisingly, however, no one apparently was able to get any photos, a factor that influences not only the rankings for this decade but for the century as well. To the best of my knowledge, this sighting represents the furthest incursion into the US inland by this species. We'll give it a total score of 12 points, with three for being our only state record, one for being a sight record only, three for being widely observed, and five according to the ABA rarity code.

The second bird to earn 12 points in the nineties appeared in the optics of Dan Webb, a Heidelberg College student doing a routine waterfowl survey at Beaver Creek Reservoir 12 November 1996. He consulted Vic Fazio, who rushed over to see the bird, and it became apparent that this individual represented the Siberian race of marbled murrelet, rumored soon to be split into a species of its own, the long-billed murrelet. And so it was. All in all, some 300 observers came from far and wide to relish this wayward bird through 18 November, and many behavioral notes and diagnostic photos were obtained. With more than 15 records away from the Pacific coast, perhaps this bird wasn't totally unexpected, but was nonetheless thoroughly enjoyed by all. And so this sighting is awarded a total score of 12 points, three for being our only state record, two for being diagnostically photographed, three for being widely observed, and four according to the definitions used in the ABA rarity code.

Well, now what? Back in the first installment of this article, I outlined my methodology for discovering an *objective* Bird of the Century, based on four comparative ranking scales. "The bird with the highest total score wins," I wrote, "either in determining the bird of each decade, or...the Bird of the Century. Simple enough." Oh, how blissfully naïve I was back in the golden days of a few months ago, when I first started laying out this series. It all seemed so straightforward then. But then something happened, something utterly pernicious and horrific. The competition ended in a tie.

A five-way tie, to be exact. Nobody likes a tie. In sports vernacular, it is said to be as exciting as kissing one's sister (not that I've ever tried this, you understand). Clearly, something had to be done to ease the logjam. A winner had to be chosen. An undisputed king must be crowned. And after all the noble designs of objectivity, it

seems we were going to have to make a *subjective* decision after all. Fasten your seat belts, please.

We are left with five birds, each with a total score of 12 points: Eurasian woodcock, red-necked stint, brambling, northern lapwing, and long-billed murrelet. I'll eliminate the woodcock first. You'll recall that its identification was partially based on bones. According to Peterjohn's *The Birds of Ohio*, however, "This skeletal material was deposited in the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, but it is no longer in the museum's collections and its whereabouts is unknown." Oops. Next to go is the lapwing, because apparently no photographs were obtained. If they had been, this bird would have graded out at 13 points, and would thus be the undisputed winner. At least this offers some measure of revenge against a bird that had the gall to leave 20 minutes before I got there. Hah. Next to go is the red-necked stint, a species that is now pretty much annual a few hours' drive away on the Atlantic coast. Sorry, comrade. Now we are down to two challengers, the brambling and the long-billed murrelet. And since I've always felt some distaste for feeder birds, especially those that make me wait thirteen hours before I see them, it seems we have a winner. And finally—in reverent hushed tones of course—we present the Bird of the Century, the Seneca County long-billed murrelet, seen and studied by some 300 people from 12 November to 18 November 1996.

We've come a long way in the 1900s, from shooting our last passenger pigeon (for eating corn) and capitolally punishing our only Harris's hawk (for harassing poultry); all the way to a weeklong group hug and learning-fest over a drably-plumaged Asian alcid. I don't know what that passenger pigeon would tell us if he could speak, but I think he might at least acknowledge that we are headed in the right direction on our perpetual road trip. That it might be too late for his kind, but not for ours. And that's a pretty good way to start a new century, I should think.



The 1990s were good years for vagrant bird species. In fact, two species tied for the Bird of the Decade—northern lapwing and long-billed murrelet. Forced to abandon his professedly objective criteria, the author crowned this long-billed murrelet the Bird of the Century. This bird was cooperative for over 300 onlookers and stayed at the Beaver Creek Reservoir, Seneca Co., from 12-18 November 1996. Photo by Vic Fazio.

## The 1999-2000 Christmas Bird Counts

by Ned Keller

This year, the 100<sup>th</sup> year for the Audubon Christmas Bird Counts, we report the results from 62 count circles. Two of them are centered outside Ohio, but include substantial portions of their areas in Ohio. Five of the counts are "unofficial" counts. These counts are conducted along the same lines as the official counts, but for various reasons the participants choose not to report them to the National Audubon Society. We want to thank the compilers of all the counts, official or otherwise, for taking the time and effort to send their results to us for this report.

Each column in the report is headed by the name and date of the count. The number in parentheses corresponds to the numbered circle on the accompanying map. We have dropped the regional groupings this year. With the increased number of count circles, we could no longer fit the results onto two sets of pages (a northern group and a southern group); and instead of trying to find three geographic ranges that made sense, we just lumped all the counts into one alphabetic listing. We have added two additional columns, for total individuals on all counts, and for number of circles reporting each species.

We received documentation for many particularly rare birds. Those records are marked by an asterisk in the report. As always, we report the information sent to us as received by the compilers, even when documentation was omitted. We did, however, drop a few obvious exotics, and corrected a couple of obvious errors. We included reports of trumpeter swans, even though they are almost certainly part of the introduced population. This species is likely to become established at some point, so we might as well start keeping track of how many winter here.

This past year, Ohio counters found a total of 1,087,541 individual birds of 147 full species, plus three more species during count weeks. Seventeen of those species were represented by only a single bird, and five more species appeared on only a single count. At the other end of the spectrum, 14 species were found on all 62 counts. The most common species, European starling, was represented by 196,010 individuals.

Counters at Millersburg found 89 species to lead the state this year, followed by Toledo with 87 species, Elyria-Loran with 83 species, Cuyahoga Falls with 82 species, and Cincinnati, Gypsum, and Mansfield with 80 species each.



Northern harriers were tallied on 45 CBCs in Ohio. This male was photographed at Killdeer Plains WA, Wyandot Co., by Len Powlick during the winter season.

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We are left with five birds, each with a total score of 12 points: Eurasian woodcock, red-necked stint, brambbling, northern lapwing, and long-billed murrelet. I'll eliminate the woodcock first. You'll recall that its identification was partially based on bones. According to Peterjohn's *The Birds of Ohio*, however, "This skeletal material was deposited in the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, but it is no longer in the museum's collections and its whereabouts is unknown." Oops. Next to go is the lapwing, because apparently no photographs were obtained. If they had been, this bird would have graded out at 13 points, and would thus be the undisputed winner. At least this offers some measure of revenge against a bird that had the gall to leave 20 minutes before I got there. Hah. Next to go is the red-necked stint, a species that is now pretty much annual a few hours' drive away on the Atlantic coast. Sorry, comrade. Now we are down to two challengers, the brambbling and the long-billed murrelet. And since I've always felt some distaste for feeder birds, especially those that make me wait thirteen hours before I see them, it seems we have a winner. And finally—in reverent hushed tones of course—we present the Bird of the Century, the Seneca County long-billed murrelet, seen and studied by some 300 people from 12 November to 18 November 1996.

We've come a long way in the 1900s, from shooting our last passenger pigeon (for eating corn) and capitolly punishing our only Harris's hawk (for harassing poultry); all the way to a weeklong group hug and learning-fest over a drably-plumaged Asian alcid. I don't know what that passenger pigeon would tell us if he could speak, but I think he might at least acknowledge that we are headed in the right direction on our perpetual road trip. That it might be too late for his kind, but not for ours. And that's a pretty good way to start a new century. I should think.



The 1990s were good years for vagrant bird species. In fact, two species tied for the Bird of the Decade—northern lapwing and long-billed murrelet. Forced to abandon his professedly objective criteria, the author crowned this long-billed murrelet the Bird of the Century. This bird was cooperative for over 300 onlookers and stayed at the Beaver Creek Reservoir, Seneca Co., from 12-18 November 1996. Photo by Vic Fazio.

## The 1999-2000 Christmas Bird Counts by Ned Keller

This year, the 100<sup>th</sup> year for the Audubon Christmas Bird Counts, we report the results from 62 count circles. Two of them are centered outside Ohio, but include substantial portions of their areas in Ohio. Five of the counts are "unofficial" counts. These counts are conducted along the same lines as the official counts, but for various reasons the participants choose not to report them to the National Audubon Society. We want to thank the compilers of all the counts, official or otherwise, for taking the time and effort to send their results to us for this report.

Each column in the report is headed by the name and date of the count. The number in parentheses corresponds to the numbered circle on the accompanying map. We have dropped the regional groupings this year. With the increased number of count circles, we could no longer fit the results onto two sets of pages (a northern group and a southern group); and instead of trying to find three geographic ranges that made a sense, we just lumped all the counts into one alphabetic listing. We have added two additional columns, for total individuals on all counts, and for number of circles reporting each species.

We received documentation for many particularly rare birds. Those records are marked by an asterisk in the report. As always, we report the information sent to us as received by the compilers, even when documentation was omitted. We did, however, drop a few obvious exotics, and corrected a couple of obvious errors. We included reports of trumpeter swans, even though they are almost certainly part of the introduced population. This species is likely to become established at some point, so we might as well start keeping track of how many winter here.

This past year, Ohio counters found a total of 1,087,541 individual birds of 147 full species, plus three more species during count weeks. Seventeen of those species were represented by only a single bird, and five more species appeared on only a single count. At the other end of the spectrum, 14 species were found on all 62 counts. The most common species, European starling, was represented by 196,010 individuals.

Counters at Millersburg found 89 species to lead the state this year, followed by Toledo with 87 species, Elyria-Loran with 83 species, Cuyahoga Falls with 82 species, and Cincinnati, Gypsum, and Mansfield with 80 species each.



Northern harriers were tallied on 45 CBCs in Ohio. This male was photographed at Killdeer Plains WA, Wyandot Co., by Len Powlick during the winter season.















## Northern Gulls Invade Dayton by Dave Dister

On Friday evening, 15 January 1999, I received a phone call from Charlotte Mathena regarding a drake harlequin duck reported from Sidney along the Great Miami River (GMR). Wow, I thought, this is super! I had been planning to bird the Lakefront from Toledo to Cleveland over the weekend, and I could just include a short detour on my way north. Saturday morning, despite the long drive ahead, I decided to take the time to first check the GMR at several spots in downtown Dayton.

Much of the river was still frozen, though much thawing was expected later in the day. My first stop was beneath a low dam, where rapids kept the water open. I scanned the gulls on a nearby icy bar, and a very large pale bird came into view. It was uniformly whitish over most of its plumage—was it a glaucous gull? Then I noticed light-brown flecking overall—yes, a first-winter glaucous gull! A nearby herring gull was approximately the same size, so it clearly wasn't an immature Iceland gull. Wow! As far as I knew, a glaucous gull had never been seen in the Dayton area.

Excited, I drove next to a point half a mile downstream, where the Mad River empties into the GMR. More gulls were there, among them a dark-winged individual. It was very large, with a very black back and wings at rest, and pink legs... it had to be a great black-backed gull, and an adult at that! This is too much, I thought, and looked around for other birders, but there was no one nearby. As I continued to scan to my left, two more large pale gulls were evident at the edge of the ice—two more first-winter glaucous gulls! I couldn't believe it... I was in downtown Dayton, not the Maumee River rapids in Toledo!

After checking a few spots further downstream, I drove home and made a flurry of mostly ineffective phone calls. Frustrated, I decided everyone was in Sidney checking out the harlequin duck. They would have wanted to know about an unprecedented accidental showing of four northern gulls in southwest Ohio, I was sure. I left the area, somewhat reluctantly heading north to bird the Lakefront via Sidney, where I located the stunning harlequin duck. After an underwhelming birding trip to Lake Erie, I called Charlotte when I got back to Dayton. Fortunately, she and several others got the time in time to see the great black-backed and two of the three glaucous gulls.

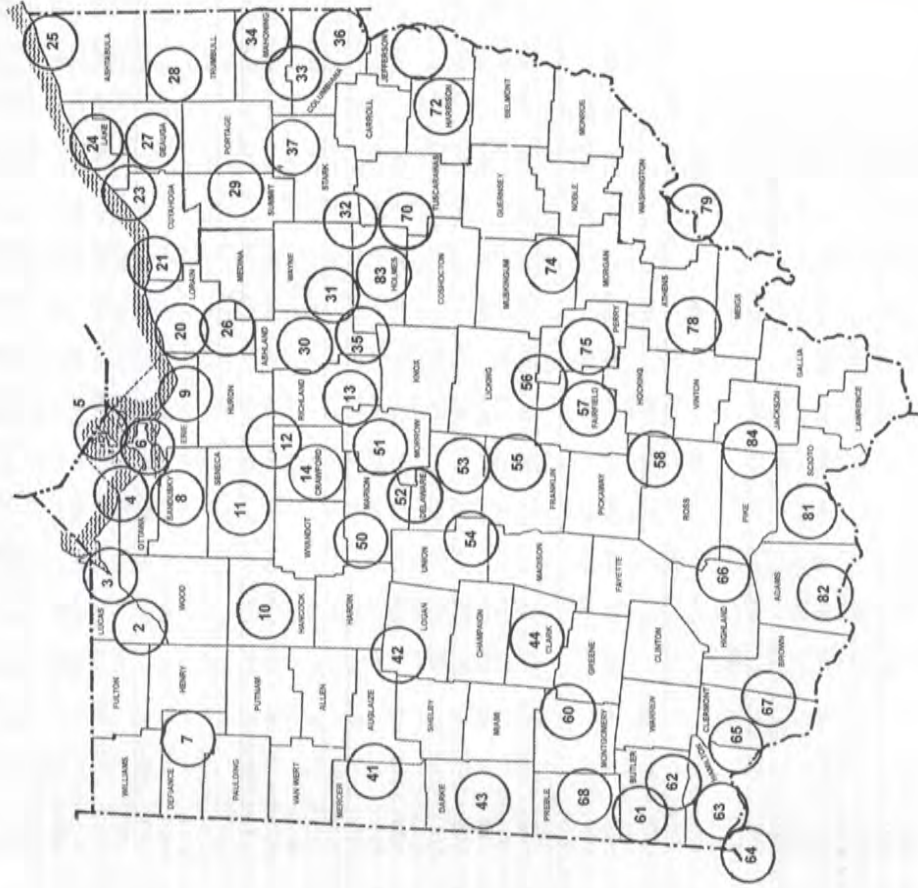
The great black-backed gull *Larus marinus* and the glaucous gull *Larus hyperboreus* are considered accidental visitors away from the Ohio shores of Lake Erie (Peterjohn 1989). There are approximately four records of single glaucous gulls in central and southern Ohio prior to this sighting (here I regard US 50 and south as representing central and southern Ohio). Within this same area, there are approximately 22 sightings of great black-backed gulls, most of which were of single birds. In relative frequency, therefore, the great black-backed is five times more likely to be seen than the glaucous gull in the central and southern counties.

The northern gull invasion of the century in southwest Ohio may not easily be eclipsed, especially in light of proposed development along the GMR in downtown Dayton and elsewhere along riverfronts. The paddleboat and casino mentality has no patience with esthetics and critical winter staging areas for wayward larids. Gravel and sand bars are considered wastelands by all too many urbanites inhabiting such riparian areas. If they only knew what they were missing...

### REFERENCE

Peterjohn, B. 1989. *The Birds of Ohio*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.

See Don Burton's article in Vol 22, No 2, last winter's *The Ohio Cardinal*, for a description of unusual weather conditions that may have influenced these sightings. —Ed.



The 1999-2000 Christmas Bird Count areas. Numbers within circles correspond to count numbers in the preceding article. The circle without a number indicates the Steubenville count from which we received no report.

## New Ohio Record: Common Ground-Dove by Jared Mizanin

*We present what we hope will be a frequently-seen feature on accepted records of birds new to Ohio. Here we offer some of Jared Mizanin's excellent documentation of his discovery, followed by a few remarks. We hope this will exemplify the procedure by which this species has come to be the 406<sup>th</sup> on the Ohio list. —Ed.*

### RARE BIRD DOCUMENTATION

**Species:** Common Ground-Dove (*Columbina passerina*)  
**Location:** Brecksville Reservation, near the Jaite National Park Service headquarters.  
**Date:** Friday, 5 Nov and Saturday, 6 Nov 1999.  
**Time seen:** Friday—afternoon/evening, between 3-5 pm; Saturday—morning, from 8:30-9:30 am, but still present when I left Saturday morning; it was the last time the bird was seen.  
**Bird description:** Tiny, plump, short-tailed dove with strong scaling on the breast. Bicolored bill—pink at base, with a black tip. Short, pink legs. Nape was bluish-gray (indicating a male). A seemingly good photo of this may be Picture #3 (the bird is centered—he may be hard to find!). Most noticeable characteristic, however, was the bright chestnut primaries and wing linings (VERY obvious in flight, moderately when feeding). Small black spots on wings. Overall pinkish below.  
**Voice:** Never vocalized.

**Behavior:** I first noticed this dove as it flew to a wooden fence, when the diagnostic wing-color attracted my attention. It then landed on the ground, where it fed warily. I had been able to get within close range; usually, however, mourning doves allow a closer approach. The common ground-dove did not associate with mourning doves. A few times it retreated to seek refuge in nearby cover: a few times in a spruce tree, once to a small deciduous sapling, and several times to brushy areas in the fields.

**Habitat:** General: gravel/grassy parking area. Specific: fairly large brushy field with deciduous forest at its outskirts. Single spruce tree nearby. Fed in parking area—probably rich in weed seeds.

**Similar species eliminated:** Mourning dove *Zenaidura macroura*—large in comparison, no reddish in wings, all black bill, long pointed tail.  
**Distance:** Average distance was between 20 and 30 feet.  
**Optical equipment:** Swift Audubon 8.5x44 binocular; photos with Canon 200 mm lens.

**Light:** Fair skies. Lighting just right.

**Previous experience with this and other species:** 1) little with common ground-dove. I've been to Florida in 1994. I believe I saw a few, but I am far more interested now than I was then. 2) Inca dove *Columbina inca*—brief experience from 16-19 Oct 1999 (suburban area near Lk Mead, NV); this species similar, but with long tail, all-black bill, and scaled nearly everywhere.

**Other observers:** After discovering the bird, I brought two non-birders along to witness the miracle, my dad (John Mizanin) and my cousin (Dave Hunter).

**Did others agree with my identification:** I showed them the ground-dove in a field guide, and they agreed; however, they weren't really serious birders.

**Books, illustrations, advice consulted, and how these influenced your description:** Didn't need anything to be 100% sure of identification... The description I've written hasn't been changed by the field guides I read; what I saw is what I wrote, and that is it.

**How long before I wrote this description:** Three or four hours.

### SOME ADDITIONAL REMARKS

Mizanin sent the OBRC 17 photographic prints as part of his documentation. The bird's image is small and not always optimally in focus in these images, but they were nevertheless important to the acceptance of the record. We reproduce here enlargements of some images of the bird; in the originals, colorations of a few plumage and bare parts characters were discernible. The bird's size is determinable by comparison to the fence-rails. The dove family has many wandering species: although a report, regrettably undocumented, of the Eurasian collared-dove *Streptopelia decaocto* was recently been made in Ohio (and another just received by the OBRC), as has one, unfortunately insufficiently documented, of white-winged dove *Zenaida asiatica*, the common ground-dove is the first vagrant columbid to be accepted for Ohio's state list.

The OBRC's deliberations went through two rounds, a recirculation resulting in unanimous acceptance. Concerns centered around the photos, which failed to show the color of the wing linings or scaliness on the breast, but these details are stressed in the written details. Taken by itself, the written documentation seems adequate to verify the species, but in the case of a first state record, especially with but a single informed observer, additional material such as photographs is very welcome, and in this case made acceptance much easier, as did an established pattern of vagrancy for this species.

The common ground-dove, while reportedly diminishing in numbers in its eastern range, has nevertheless made the record-books well north of its range. While never acceptably recorded in West Virginia or Kentucky, it is on the official lists of Indiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Illinois, and as far north as Wisconsin, Minnesota, Ontario, and Nova Scotia, as well as in many states along the eastern seaboard. A good treatment of this species can be found in: Dunn J., and K. Garrett. 1990. The Identification of Ruddy and Common Ground-Doves. *Birding* 32:138-145. —Ed.



*These two photographs represent only a portion of the documentation submitted by Jared Mizanin after his discovery of Ohio's first common ground-dove on 5 November 1999. Some salient field marks can be distinguished in these photos such as body size and shape, tail shape, bill proportion and wing covert markings.*

## Recent Actions of the Ohio Bird Records Committee

The Ohio Bird Records Committee exists to increase knowledge of Ohio's birdlife by validating records, maintaining for the public archival records of occurrences of rare birds in the state, and establishing the official state list of species. The OBRC relies vitally upon the help of the birding community in sending in details of their sightings of rare birds. *The Ohio Cardinal*, as a journal of record, will not treat reports of OBRC Review Species as established until accepted by the Committee, and hence will not usually publish reports of rarities not supported by documentation submitted to the OBRC. The Review List, which includes all species sufficiently infrequent in Ohio as to require documentation (specimen, photograph, tape recording, full written description) for their inclusion in the official record, was last published in this journal last spring, in Vol 22, No 33, p 99.

In examining records, the OBRC does not judge sightings, but documentations of sightings. The issue at stake is not whether the bird in question was present—the Committee cannot say, as its members were not there at the time of the sighting—but whether the details received describing the bird will verify it as to species when consulted by others in the future. It sometimes happens, for example, that members of the Committee feel sure that a given rarity was seen, but regretfully must vote against accepting the record because the documentation available does not suffice to verify the sighting for the record. All documentation is archived for future researchers by the OBRC, and arrangements are currently being made to deposit materials routinely with the OSU Museum of Biological Diversity in Columbus. Copies of materials in these archives are available to the public on request to the Secretary, with the exception of the identities of authors of vote sheets. Thanks to OBRC Secretary Jim McCormac for supplying information for this report.

**ACCEPTED RECORDS:** Documentation received from the observers specified for the following species on the indicated dates and places was judged sufficient to verify the record by at least nine members of the Committee:

Ross's Goose—Fayette County, 19 January 2000, observer D. Sanders  
Mississippi Kite—Summit County, 4 July 1999, observer T. LePage  
Yellow Rail—Marion County, 15 August 1999, observer J. Grabmeier  
Piping Plover—Erie County, 15 September 1999, observer V. Fazio  
Pomarine Jaeger—Coshocton County, 22 June 1999, observer H. H. Troyer  
Common Ground-Dove—Cuyahoga County, 6 November 1999, observer J. Mizanin; a new Ohio record.

Harris's Sparrow—Holmes County, 22 December 1998, observers I. Miller, G. Miller

**RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED:** Documentation received for the following reports received fewer than six votes to accept, and were not accepted.

Gyr Falcon—Lucas County, April 1998  
Western Kingbird—Muskingum County, August 1999  
*Vermivora/Opornis* warbler—Stark County, January 1999 (not accepted as either *V. celata* or *O. tolmiei*)  
Pine Grosbeak—Paulding County, October 1999

**RECORDS IN RECIRCULATION:** The following records are currently being recirculated, the documentation for which having received between six and eight votes to accept.

Parasitic Jaeger—Lake County, September 1999  
Long-tailed Jaeger—Lake County, October 1999  
Glaucous-winged Gull—Cuyahoga County, February 1989

Scheduled for first circulations are the following: western grebe, Richland County, 17 December 1999; Ross's goose, Ottawa County 19 January 2000; Ross's goose, Mercer County, 1 April 2000; jaeger sp., Clark County, 19 December 1999; black-headed gull, Ashtabula County, 22 March 2000; Eurasian collared-dove, Washington County, 26 March 2000 (if accepted, a first state record); Bohemian waxwing, Cuyahoga County, 12 December 2000; Harris's sparrow, Holmes County, 9 January 2000.

Actions taken at the 19 March 2000 Annual Meeting, in addition to those above, include the following affecting bird records:

**Trumpeter Swan:** Existing evidence offered for the wild breeding status of this species was briefly reviewed, in order to establish the precise status of this species on the official list. It was agreed that no definite evidence has yet come to light to verify the breeding status of this species in the wild in Ohio. More research was recommended, and an article outlining results was suggested.

**Bicknell's Thrush:** An Ohio specimen labeled as this species is at OSUM, and photos and measurements were taken. Because the measurements are not definitive, the Committee asked for expert opinion and/or DNA analysis before undertaking a review of the record.

**Baird's Sparrow:** This is now the only species on the official list documented solely by a sight record from a single observer. Known documentation consists of a brief account in the *Auk* 73:275-276. De facto acceptance was made some years ago with its inclusion in the OBRC publication *Abundance and Distribution of the Birds of Ohio*, but a search will be made in recently-available material for documentation sufficient to re-open consideration of the record.

**Black Rosy-Finch:** The record is apparently incomplete—i.e., some vote sheets are missing for a 1997 review after rosy finch was split by the AOU—for a sighting documented in 1971. A recirculation will be conducted. *Bill Whan*



This pomarine jaeger spent the day of 22 June 1999 lounging in a Coshocton Co. yard, providing a very unusual summer record. Photo by Henry H. Troyer.



## Birders Needed as Volunteers for Project

For the study he describes below, Mark Miller needs as volunteers Ohio birders who regularly bird favorite areas. You can help by describing the habitat in the area you choose, then collecting data (notes on time, weather, numbers of birds and species detected) during a few visits there during breeding season and mid-winter. This is a perfect opportunity to make a regular morning bird-walk, or frequent visits to a favorite birding area, into something more meaningful—for the scientific enterprise, and perhaps even for bird populations in your area. The record-keeping duties are easy, and the rewards could be considerable. Probably every reader of *The Ohio Cardinal* could contribute to this worthwhile effort without a lot of extra effort; please consider it. —Ed.

Profound changes have been documented in Ohio's avian community over the previous century. We know this by comparing current observations with records published in the early 1900s, by examining Christmas Bird Counts, and more recently from changes documented by the Breeding Bird Survey. While we have learned much from these sources, the data gathered in these projects are usually very large-scale. As a result, avian trends documented with these data usually cannot be correlated to changes in habitat. If habitat change in Ohio is driving change in Ohio's bird community, we need to document this relationship carefully to enable us to protect and manage our avifauna.

Last year I initiated a large-scale volunteer-oriented survey of Ohio's wintering and breeding bird communities. This survey uses modern sight-resight techniques, analogous to capture-mark-recapture statistical methodology, to estimate species richness on a relatively small scale. Habitat composition within each surveyed area is described annually. If enough volunteers participate in this project, more rigorous testing for correlations between avian community dynamics and habitat change will be possible than with existing large-scale surveys.

This new survey will be described in detail in the Summer 2000 issue of *Birds and Natural History*; I will also gladly send details upon request. It requires of participants 3-5 visits between late May and early July, but mostly in June, to record all species encountered in an area of your choosing. Another set of 3-5 visits to that same area between 15 December-15 February, but mostly in January, will enable comparison between winter and summer communities. Even if only a few individuals adopt this sampling approach, I believe the observations documented by those birders will be invaluable over time, and Ohio's avifauna will benefit. If you are interested in learning more about this survey, and how you can participate, please contact me.

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Another look at the Cleveland Hts., Cuyahoga Co., white-winged crossbill. Photo by Laura Gooch (13 March 2000).



Long-eared owls were conspicuous again this year at Killdeer Plains WA, Wyandot Co. This one was viewed and photographed by Len Fowlick during the period.

**A friendly reminder...**

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