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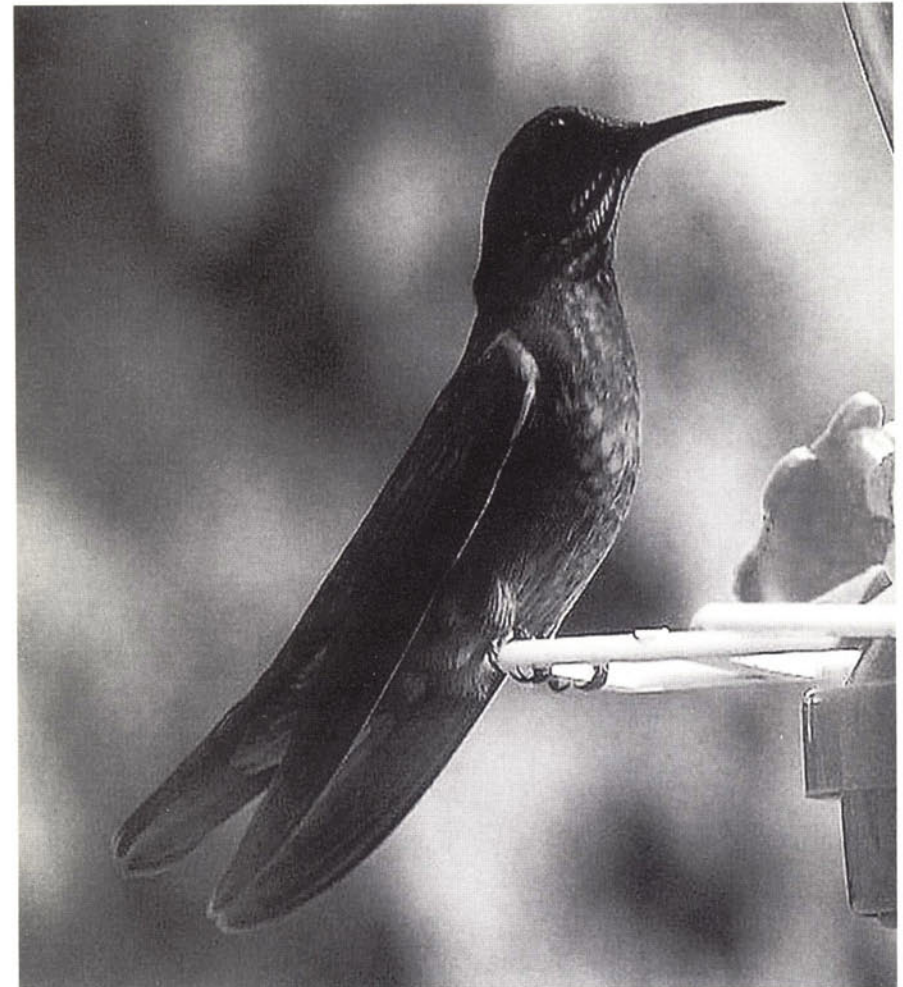
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*The Ohio Cardinal* is a quarterly publication devoted to the study and appreciation of Ohio's birdlife.

*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.

<b>Seasonal Report Due Dates</b> Winter (Dec.-Feb.)-March 25 Spring (Mar.-May)-June 25 Summer (June-July)-August 25 Autumn (Aug.-Nov.)-December 25	<b>Please send all reports to:</b> Bill Whan 223 E. Tulane Road Columbus, OH 43202 <a href="mailto:billwhan@columbus.rr.com">billwhan@columbus.rr.com</a>
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**On the Cover:** A black-and-white reproduction does little justice to this neon wonder. Gabe Hostetler caught on film this moment of the green violet-ear's visit to a feeder in Holmes Co. on 16 Aug.

## Fall 2005 Overview and Reports

### Bill Whan

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A hot, wet August and September were followed by an average October. November's first half was quite warm, prompting some late stays—a cuckoo on the 11th, and three very late vireos, one a state record—with a second half abnormally cold. Some interesting bird phenomena of the season can be ascribed to extreme weather. On 31 August, the eye of the sprawling gyre of Hurricane Katrina passed through Ohio; while it brought no waifs from the Gulf except perhaps for a jaeger and several laughing gulls at reservoirs, it perturbed the movements of long-distance migrants, grounding remarkable numbers of shorebirds at Conneaut Harbor for a few hours, blowing black terns and red-necked phalaropes all over the state, and perhaps influencing other odd occurrences, such as 30+ buff-breasted sandpipers at a single site, and a state-wide movement of loons. Certainly the day before Katrina had bestowed avian riches in Tennessee: reported were bridled and sooty and royal terns, black skimmer, magnificent frigatebird, greater shearwater, and south polar skua! Back in Ohio, November's unrelenting western winds, and of course the continuation of the longest hurricane season in history, defied normal expectations and brought surprises.

Plentiful open water to the north made ducks tardy in arriving. Numbers of warblers and other neotropical migrants were disappointing by most accounts; judging by so many heard passing overhead in September, they simply had little reason to set down in Ohio. Shorebirds put on a better show than usual; this came about when human control of water levels benefited them: on purpose at ONWR, and then as a by-product of profligate lawn-watering at places supplied by reservoirs such as Hoover and Berlin, while Conneaut did its part as always.

A total of 18 review species reported this season was much better than average, but phenomenal were three potentially new to the Ohio list, underlined in the list that follows: Ross's goose (three), cackling goose (three), northern gannet, magnificent frigatebird (potential fifth state record), glossy ibis (6), *Plegadis* ibis sp. (three), yellow rail, piping plover (two), ruff (four), parasitic jaeger (two), white-winged dove (potential third state record), green violet-ear, rufous hummingbird (seven), *Selasphorus* hummingbird sp. (nine), Anna's hummingbird, gray flycatcher (potential second state record), western kingbird, black-billed magpie (two: potential fourth state record), cave swallow (dozens), and black-throated gray warbler. Predicted irruptions of northern species—snowy owls, raptors, winter finches, etc.—did not come to pass during the period, except for a good red-breasted nuthatch flight in many parts of the state.

It is fascinating to hear believers in an apocalyptic theory of history—such as the former Interior Secretary who saw little point in preserving the

environment, since we live in the Last Days—so readily embrace a cyclical one when it serves their purposes. When alarming downturns are noticed in the natural world—dying fisheries, stunted forests, increasing extinctions, and the like—we are urged to relax, and consider them parts of larger natural cycles. Nowhere has this argument been more often invoked than in the debate over global warming. According to a recent article in *Science*, however, studies of carbon dioxide trapped in old ice cores demonstrate that levels of this greenhouse gas are now 27% higher than at any time in the past 650,000 years, and that significant increases in trapped bubbles of this gas coincided with a spike in the burning of coal during the Industrial Revolution. Are industrialization and human population growth parts of cycles, too, or further steps on the way to oblivion?

#### For the Record:

The OBRC has received documentation for a  **dusky flycatcher**  measured and photographed in the hand in *Ottawa* June 2005. If accepted, this would be the first Ohio record of this western *Empidonax* species, and one of very few in eastern North America.

Interesting recent records from OSU banders in se Ohio include the following: in *Vinton*, an adult male white-throated sparrow near **Radcliff** on 12 Jun 2004, a veery (juvenile, sex unknown) near **Zaleski** 16 Jul 2005; and in *Jackson*, an adult female Tennessee warbler 25 Jul 2004 and an adult female magnolia warbler 4 Jun 2005 (all S. Lehnen).

The Reports follow the nomenclature and taxonomic order of the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the *AOU Check-list of North American Birds* (1998), including the 46<sup>th</sup> Supplement (July 2005). Underlined names of species indicate those on the OBRC Review List; documentation is needed to add reports of these species to official state records, or to attributed records in the Reports. When supplied, county names appear *italicized*. Unless numbers are specified, sightings refer to single birds. Abbreviations, conventions, and symbols used in the Reports should be readily understood, with the possible exceptions of the following: ad=adult; alt=alternate (breeding) plumage; BCSP=Buck Ck SP in *Clark*; BIWA=Big Isl WA in *Marion*; BSBO=Black Swamp Bird Observatory; CCE= Crane Ck estuary in ONWR; CPNWR=Cedar Point National Wildlife Refuge in *Lucas*; CVNP=Cuyahoga Valley Natl Pk in *Cuyahoga* and *Summit*; Dike 14=the Gordon Park impoundment in Cleveland; EFSP=East Fork SP in *Clermont*; eop=end of the period, in this case 30 Nov 2005; EHSP=East Hbr SP in *Ottawa*; fide= "in trust of," said of data conveyed on behalf of another person; Gilmore Ponds is in *Butler*=Grand Lk St Marys in *Mercer/Auglaize*, HBSB=Headlands Beach SP in *Lake*; HBSNP=Headlands Beach SNP in *Lake*; HWSP=Hueston Wds SP (*Butler/Preble*); imm=immature; Killbuck=Killbuck Marsh WA in *Wayne/Holmes*; KPWA=Killdeer Plains WA in *Wyandot*; LSR=Lakeshore Reservation (MP) in *Lake*; Magee=Magee Marsh WA in *Ottawa/Lucas*; MBSP=Maumee Bay SP in *Lucas*; MP=Metropark; m obs=many observers; MWW=Miami-Whitewater Wetlands in *Hamilton*; NWR=National Wildlife Refuge; OBRC=Ohio Bird Records Committee; ODOW=Ohio Division of Wildlife; ONWR=Ottawa NWR in *Ottawa/Lucas*; ONWRC=monthly bird census at ONWR; PCWA=Pickerel Ck WA in *Sandusky*; ph=photograph, Res=Reservoir; Res'n=Reservation; SF=State Forest; SNP=State Nature Preserve; SP=State Park; SVWA=Spring Valley WA in *Greene/Warren*; WA=Wildlife Area.

## Fall 2005 Reports

**Greater white-fronted goose:** A fair showing, due to persistent (all Nov days but four) westerly winds. Five to six spent 4 Nov-eop near **Youngstown** (B. Jones), perhaps accounting for five at **Mosquito Lk** 5 Nov (S. Butcher). In **Auglaize**, a flock that began at 42 (including four apparently of the "Greenland" race, with orange soft parts and extensive barring below) 12 Nov dwindled to five or six by 25 Nov (both T. Shively).

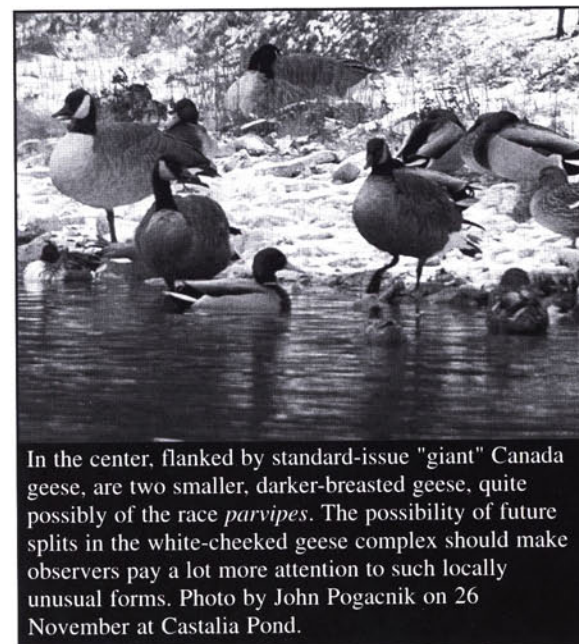
**Snow goose:** Widespread but never numerous, ~120 birds seen starting late Oct in **Lucas, Ottawa, Trumbull, Seneca, Wyandot, Auglaize, Lake, Erie, Licking, Summit, Athens,** and **Gallia**. High count was 24, seen at **Ottawa NWR** 6 Nov (ONWRC).

**Ross's goose:** Three reported: one, found 9 Nov at **HWSP**, remained through 22 Nov for m obs. Two, accompanying an apparent Ross's X snow goose showing intermediate characteristics, were regular in **Auglaize** 12-25 Nov. Details with the OBRC.

**Brant:** Seen flying along the Erie shore were nine in **Lake** 9 Oct (J. Pogacnik), and five in **Rocky River** 22 Oct (S. Walker).

**Cackling goose:** Single birds were reported from **Williams** on 25 Oct, **Summit** 31 Oct, **Lucas** 8 Nov, **Auglaize** 12 Nov, and **Ashtabula** and **Lake** 20 Nov. Details to the OBRC. Pure flocks of 47, 65, and 73 are in the published literature for Ohio.

**Canada goose:** On 26 Nov J. Pogacnik photographed two smaller—but not tiny--Canada geese in **Castalia** that may have been of the race *parvipes*, the smallest subspecies of *Branta canadensis*; these and photos of another possible *parvipes* bird by V. Fazio last year may be revisited if further splits in this species occur.



In the center, flanked by standard-issue "giant" Canada geese, are two smaller, darker-breasted geese, quite possibly of the race *parvipes*. The possibility of future splits in the white-checked geese complex should make observers pay a lot more attention to such locally unusual forms. Photo by John Pogacnik on 26 November at Castalia Pond.

**Mute swan:** Continues to increase its numbers and range, with a rather alarming 40 at **Mogadore Res** 1 Aug (P. Devlin)

**Tundra swan:** The wintering flock at **ONWR** had showed up by 6 Nov (79 for the ONWRC), but the dam-burst came later across the NE quadrant of the state, with 1500+ passing over **Geauga** on the 16<sup>th</sup> (A. Fjelstad *vide* L. Rosche) and the 17<sup>th</sup>, with 70 over **Jefferson** (S. Albaugh) and 1043 S. Kinzey counted crossing the s. end of **Pymatuning Res.** in **Ashtabula**. Quite a few lingered through the eop in the region.

**Wood duck:** B. Powell counted ~400 at **KPWA** 26 Aug, and E. Tramer 517 at **CPNWR** on 25 Sep. R&S Harlan found a duck with a late young chick in **Akron** 15 Sep. A female in **Holmes** 27 Nov was staying late (B. Glick).

**Gadwall:** The **ONWRC** found two on 7 Aug, then 447 on 2 Oct. By 22 Oct, the census team at **CPNWR** counted 1609 (E. Tramer), and by 6 Nov the team at **ONWR** 883.

**American wigeon:** Six at **ONWR** on the 7 Aug census had grown to 714 by 2 Oct, with 663 still there 6 Nov; at neighboring marshes at **CPNWR**, 622 were tallied on 22 Oct (E. Tramer).

**American black duck:** Many reported, though in numbers less than 50. Only 81 were counted at **CPNWR** 22 Oct (E. Tramer), 274 were at **Ottawa** 6 Nov (ONWRC), and ~200 were in **Sandusky Bay** 15 Nov (V. Fazio).

**Mallard:** Birds roosting upriver from the **Huron** harbor numbered 550 on 6 Nov (R&S Harlan). The **CPNWR** census team counted 1502 at the refuge 12 Nov (E. Tramer), and that for **ONWR** 7927 on the 6th.

**Blue-winged teal:** B. Powell estimated 1000 at **KPWA** 26 Aug. The census teams found 16 at **ONWR** 7 Aug and 112 sheltering at **CPNWR** 25 Sep; the last report was of a lone bird at **BCSP** 16 Oct (D. Overacker).

**Northern shoveler:** Appreciable numbers included 155 on 12 Nov at **CPNWR** (E. Tramer); 10 lingered at **BCSP** 27 Nov (D. Overacker).

**Northern pintail:** Not numerous, with three-digit counts only at **Ottawa**, with ~100 on 2 Oct and 160 on 6 Nov (ONWRC).

**Green-winged teal:** At **Ottawa**, 22 on 7 Aug grew to 1293 on 2 Oct, with 222 still on 6 Nov (ONWRC). Over 100 were at **Sandy Ridge MP** in **Lorain** 4 Nov (J. Kolo-Rose).

**Canvasback:** The first appeared at **Wellington Res** in **Lorain** 6 Nov (R&S Harlan), and the following day J. Pogacnik recorded the season's high of 480 off **LSR**.

**Redhead:** Slow to arrive, with one on the 2 Oct **ONWRC** and only 35 at **Wellington Res** 19 Nov (J. Brumfield).

**Ring-necked duck:** C. Holt found a drake at **Conneaut** early on 4 Sep. At **Camp Dennison** in **Hamilton**, B. Foppe counted 234 on 16 Oct, 430 on 27 Oct, and 455 on 10 Nov. The **CNPWR** census had 630 on 12 Nov, but **ONWR**'s none on the 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Greater scaup:** Trickled in, with a high count of 18 on 7 Nov at **LSR** (J. Pogacnik).

**Lesser scaup:** Three had come to **Wellington** by 13 Oct, but Nov high counts were only 82 at **LSR** the 10<sup>th</sup> and 260 at **Hoover and Alum Ck Res** the 23<sup>rd</sup> (R. Thorn).

**Harlequin duck:** An ad female was among the **Camp Dennison** throngs 27-28 Nov (B. Foppe).

**Surf scoter:** Thirty-eight reported, beginning with a female at **Caesar Ck SP** 27 Oct (L. Gara), and a high of five, 23 Nov at **LSR** (J. Pogacnik).

**White-winged scoter:** A couple were off **LSR** 7 Nov (J. Pogacnik). Two reports from 26 Nov, with six at **BCSP** in **Clark** (D. Overacker) and two at **Clear Fork Res** in **Morrow** (S. Snyder).

**Black scoter:** About 90 reported, nearly all in Nov along the **Erie lakeshore**.

**Long-tailed duck:** Scarce. J. Pogacnik saw singletons off **LSR** on 9 and 10 Nov, and M. Vass one at **Conneaut** 12 Nov. No inland reports.

**Bufflehead:** First reported at the **Portage Lks**, with two on 29 Oct (G. Bennett); by 20 Nov 72 at **Kelleys Isl** barely presaged the traditional multitudes there (T. Bartlett).

**Common goldeneye:** First noted 23 Oct at **Rocky River** (P. Lozano), with only 22 for a high count, off **LSR** 7 Nov (J. Pogacnik).

**Hooded merganser:** Gathered rather late in decent numbers at favored reservoirs, with 100+ at **La Due** on 20 Nov (R. Rickard) and 280 in **Hoover and Alum Ck Res** 23 Nov (R. Thorn).

**Common merganser:** The first was reported at **EFSP** 30 Oct (J. Stenger), with a high count of 223 off **LSR** 7 Nov (J. Pogacnik).

**Red-breasted merganser:** At **LSR** J. Pogacnik saw a flyby as early as 7 Oct, 1428 on 7 Nov, then 4060 on 23 Nov.

**Ruddy duck:** **Wellington Res** harbored 75 on 17 Oct (H. Ostermiller), and 850 by 19 Nov (J. Brumfield). Another favored locale, **Lima's Metzger Res**, boasted 185 as early as 22 Oct (D. Dister). **Pine Lk** in **Mahoning** boasted ~100 on 20 Oct (C. Holt).

**Red-throated loon:** An average year. One stayed 19-27 Nov at **BCSP** (D. Overacker), singles were in **Ashtabula** 5 Nov and in **Lake** 19 Nov (both J. Pogacnik), one swam off **Kelleys Isl** 20 Nov (T. Bartlett), and B. Stanley discovered one in **EFSP** 27 Nov.

**Common loon:** Two that may have been juveniles were a mystery on **Lima's Metzger Res** 6 Aug (D. Dister). Most other loons arrived in Oct, with the big numbers in Nov, such as 36 flyovers in **Holmes** the 17<sup>th</sup> (E. Schlabach), ~350 off **LSR** the 19<sup>th</sup>, and 53 off **Rocky River** the 23<sup>rd</sup> (P. Lozano).

**Pied-billed grebe:** Well-represented in healthy bodies of water, with higher counts of 24 at **Mosquito** 14 Oct (C. Holt), 15-20 at **BCSP** 8 Nov (B. Menker *fide* D. Overacker), 31 at **Mogadore Res** 20 Nov (G. Bennett), and 32 at **Clear Fk Res** 26 Nov (S. Snyder).

**Horned grebe:** One in alt plumage remained in a **Paulding** pond through Aug (M&D Dunakin). A rather dinky flight, with none earlier than 25 Sep (two at **KPWA** by H. Ostermiller), and high counts of 11 at **EFSP** 10 Nov (D. Morse) and nine at **Hoover Res** 17 Nov (R. Thorn).

**Red-necked grebe:** An unremarkable showing, with only one on **Lake Erie:** the first a basic bird at **EFSP** 30 Oct (J. Stenger), then two at **Mosquito** 20 Nov (B. Smith *fide* M. Vass), one at **LSR** 24 Nov (J. Pogacnik), one at **Pleasant Hill Res** 26 Nov (S. Snyder), and another at **BCSP** 26-28 Nov (M. Ream).

**Eared grebe:** One 21 Sep at **MBSP** (ph, B. Stanley), and another 5 Nov at **Hoover** (R. Asamoto). That's it.

**Northern gannet:** 2 imms at **Conneaut** 11 Nov (T. Hochstetler), and 26 Nov at **HBSP** (M obs *fide* J. Brumfield).

**American white pelican:** Becoming regular in ones and twos during migrations. One from the summer period persisted at the **Cedar Pt Chaussee** through 25 Aug (B. Bowman), two occupied **Medusa Marsh** 3 Aug (C. Caldwell) through 10 Oct (S. Young), and another **Hoover Res** 22 Aug (B. Royse) through 3 Sep (P. Gardner). P. Chad saw one at **ONWR** 30 Aug, and m obs birds in **n. Toledo** 9 Sep and **s. Toledo** starting 13 Oct. One at **Prospect in Marion** 6 Nov *fide* P. Soehnen brought up the rear.

**Double-crested cormorant:** E. Tramer reported 6064 at **CPNWR** 25 Sep. Migrants moved in numbers through the interior later, with flocks of ~800 at both **Deer Creek Res** 23 Oct (B. Royse) and at **Hoover** 25 Oct (R. Thorn), but 2010 remained at **Kelleys Isl** 20 Nov. This summer 3813 pairs ( $\pm$  346) were counted on **West Sister Island**, after 363 birds had been shot by ODOV personnel acting under a Federal research permit.

**Magnificent frigatebird:** Doubtless aided by an active hurricane season, birds were reported in several spots in the Midwest. On 5 Sept, a frigatebird was seen and photographed at fairly close range at **LSR in Lake**; it appeared to be an immature magnificent frigatebird.

**American bittern:** Diminished in numbers, and of course secretive; one was discovered by the 7 Aug **ONWRC**. Another in **Willoughby** 11 Aug was a migrant (J. Pogacnik).

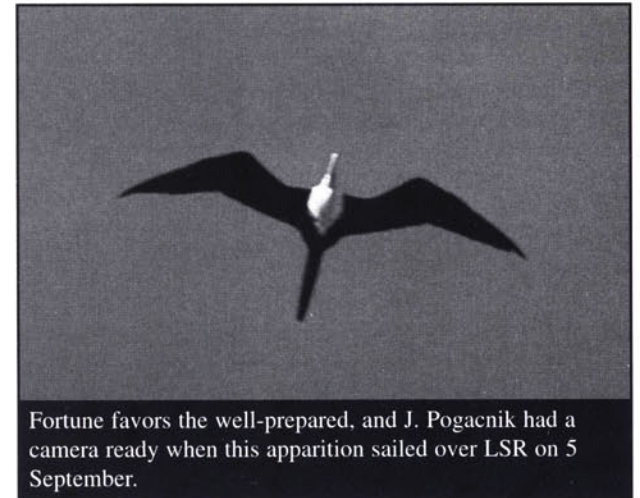
**Great egret:** This summer  $827 \pm 133$  pairs nested on **West Sister Island**. At

**Medusa** 275 were counted 3 Aug (C. Caldwell), and at **CPNWR** 221 on 20 Aug (E. Tramer), with a high count of 339 on the 2 Oct **ONWR** census, where 86 remained 6 Nov. Away from the colonies, D. Dister found 35 in **Mercer** 6 Aug, and R&S Harlan one in **Summit** 26 Sep. One stayed at **West Harbor** through 27 Nov (J. Pogacnik).

**Snowy egret:** Fourteen pairs nested on **West Sister Isl**. Most foraged at **Ottawa NWR**, with 25 tallied there 4 Sep, but **Medusa Marsh** attracted many, with 14 there 12 Aug (B. Whan) and 13 (incl. two juv) 25 Aug (B. Bowman).

**Little blue heron:** Thirteen, all immature birds, reported: one in **Paulding** 1-5 Aug (D&M Dunakin), one at **Gilmore Ponds** 2 Aug (J. Becker), two in **Chillicothe** 5-8 Aug (D. Hess), two on the 7 Aug **ONWRC**, one near **Wooster** 17-24 Aug (S. Snyder), one at **Medusa** 20-26 Aug (C. Caldwell), one in **Defiance** 25-27 Aug (J. Yochum), two at **Ottawa NWR** 27 Aug (E. Schlabach), perhaps another at **Ottawa NWR** 29 Aug (C. Putnam), and one at **HWSP** 31 Aug (D. Russell).

**Cattle egret:** This summer ten pairs nested at **West Sister Isl**; previously only single pairs had nested, in 1998 and 1999. Only one local sighting resulted, a single bird for the 7 Aug **ONWRC**. Breeding probably continues at **Turning Pt Isl** in **Sandusky**, with an egret detected there 15 Aug (J. Lehman). Farther afield, on 1 Nov G. Bennett had six in **Akron**, and on 12 Nov D. Dister another at **GLSM in Auglaize**.



Fortune favors the well-prepared, and J. Pogacnik had a camera ready when this apparition sailed over LSR on 5 September.

**Green heron:** Normal numbers, but one in *Lake* 21 Nov was way behind (J. Pogacnik).

**Black-crowned night-heron:** On **West Sister Isl**, 500 ±114 breeding pairs was narrowly the highest count in ten years. Eight young were at the new **Spring Grove Cemetery** colony in **Cincinnati** 2 Aug (B. Foppe). About eight, with one juv, were found at **Island Pk** in **Dayton** 30 Sep (P. Mc Carthy). At the downtown **Cleveland** roost, P. Lozano found 17 on 9 Nov and 39 on 21 Nov.

**Yellow-crowned night-heron:** C. Holt discovered a first-fall bird at **MBSP** 26 Aug.

**Glossy ibis:** One ad basic foraged along the **Magee Marsh** causeway 2-4 Oct (m obs), and two in **Mosquito Ck WA** 22 Sep-18 Oct (m obs), with details to the OBRC.

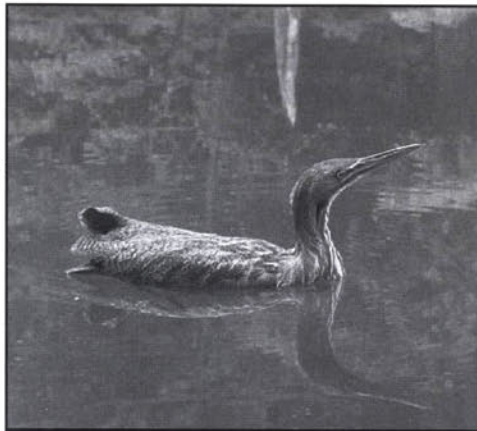
**Plegadis ibis species:** One was a flyover in **Wood** 14 Aug. Two, said probably to be glossies, spent 2-5 Oct behind a shopping center in **Napoleon** in **Henry**, m obs.

**Black vulture:** One wandered to **Kelleys Isl** 26 Aug (P. Chaon). More within normal range, the **Granville** roost featured 25+ with 50+ TVs 1 Nov (S. Woolard), and 15 were counted in the **Cowan Lk** roost 24 Nov (L. Gara).

**Turkey vulture:** ~2000 in **Toledo** 9 Oct were perhaps not unexpected, ~43,000 having been tallied just north of town that day in **Michigan**, but it probably trumps L.E. Hicks's record of 3800 counted on a 125-mi drive between **Fremont** and **Columbus** in the fall of 1936. At the **Athens** roost, ~125 soared 4 Sep (B. Whan), and B. Foppe counted 90 at the **Batavia** roost 18 Nov.

**Osprey:** Nov reports included singles at **Hoover** the 6<sup>th</sup> (R. Thorn), in **Clermont** the 10<sup>th</sup> (D. Morse), in **Warren** 11 Nov (B. Powell), s. of **Toledo** the 13<sup>th</sup> (E. Tramer), **Wellington Res** the 20th (J. Watts), and two in different **Hancock** spots 22 Nov (B. Hardesty). We know the reintroduced birds stage earlier arrivals; do they also stay later?

**Bald eagle:** Twenty-seven were at **CPNWR** on both 20 Aug and 12 Nov (E. Tramer).



This American bittern, shown here exhibiting unfamiliar behavior, was rehabilitated for three weeks after suffering probable head or spine trauma, and is shown after release at the Cincinnati Nature Center. Photo by Brett Gilmore 10/11/05; information from Jennifer Ghai.

**Northern harrier:** Appeared down in numbers, but perhaps only delayed. The high count of six came from way down at **Crown City WA** 25 Nov (D. Patick).

**Red-shouldered hawk:** The CVNP census of 10 Sep found just as many red-shoulders as of red-taileds, 14. One in **German Twp, Montgomery**, on 19 Nov occupied an area where the species is still scarce (D. Dister).

**Broad-winged hawk:** One 1 Aug over the Oak Openings in **Toledo** was probably one of the occasional local nesters. Among migrants, two kettles amounting to 200 birds soared over **Dayton** on 20 Sep (J. Beale), and on 24 Sep 26 passed over e. **Holmes** (E. Schlabach) and 70 se. of **Paulding** (D&M Dunakin).

**Red-tailed hawk:** A dark-morph bird was photographed 20 Nov at **MBSP** (B. Zwiebel).

**Rough-legged hawk:** Arrived on schedule, with a bird s. of **Bucyrus** 18 Oct (P. Rodewald) and another at **Killdeer** 27 Oct (B. Shively), but numbers were down statewide, with a high of 9 in fields near **Cadiz** 29 Nov (T. Ford).

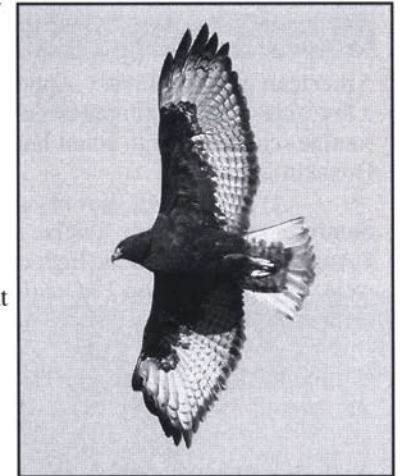
**Golden eagle:** Now regularly seen near **Toledo** late Oct-early Nov, with two there 24 Oct (R. Nirschl), one ad 28 Oct (G. Links), and another 2 Nov (S. McNamee). One ad, (perhaps two) spotted over **Pickaway** and **Ross** 11 Nov (B. Crow). An imm seen twice at **The Wilds** in **Muskingum** 16 Nov may have presaged another wintering presence (A. Parker).

**Merlin:** Migrants were widely reported during brief stays, but in **Cincinnati** birds returned to past wintering haunts in urban cemeteries with mature conifers: L. Brumbaugh spotted a male in the same tree as last year in **Spr Grove Cem** 20 Nov, and B. Zimmerman a female at **St. Joseph's Cem** on 19 Nov.

**Yellow rail:** One seen 5 Oct in **Tuscarawas** was documented for the OBRC.

**King rail:** E. Tramer detected one at **Ottawa NWR** 27 Aug.

**Sora:** Reports, if not real numbers, were down for this species.



Red-tailed hawk, photo by Brian Zwiebel, from MBSP 20 Nov. This dark morph is infrequently seen in Ohio: the tail is tinged with reddish on this bird, but the tail band is ill-defined.

**Common moorhen:** Scanty reports came from the large marshes—and none from some—with a high count of only four in *Lucas* on 30 Sep (D. Overacker).

**American coot:** This rallid had a good season. The first large number, 143, came from **Camp Dennison** on 1 Oct, with 1620 there by 4 Nov (B. Foppe); then 600 came to **Wellington Res** 6 Nov (R&S Harlan), 4-5000 to **BCSP** 8 Nov (M. Ream), 455 to **Mosquito Ck Lk** 9 Nov (J. Hochadel), ~500 to **Caesar Ck SP** 9 Nov (M. Ream), and 2300+ to **Sandusky Bay** 15 Nov (V. Fazio).

**Sandhill crane:** Over a thousand migrants reported in the west, with 500+ on 24-29 Nov in *Hamilton/Brown/Clermont* (m obs). In areas where known or suspected to have bred, five were at **Lake La Su An WA** in *Williams* 1 Aug (T. Kemp), two persisted at **SVWA** through Aug-11 Nov (N. Cade), four were located in **Funk WA** in *Wayne* 4 Oct (B. Glick), and four were at **La Due Res** 19 Nov (L. Rosche).

**Black-bellied plover:** Appeared with nine birds for the 7 Aug **ONWRC**, and last reported 5-7 Nov at **Caesar Ck SP** (L. Gara); in between the high count was only 30, at **Ottawa NWR** on 1 Oct (E. Tramer).

**American golden-plover:** Appeared mostly in the **NW** and at **Conneaut**, with a few at reservoirs with prairie-like margins like **Berlin** and **Hoover**, and on a routine schedule. High count but eighteen, at **Paulding** 12 Sep (M&D Dunakin).

**Semipalmated plover:** Twelve at **Hoover Res** 2 Aug (R. Thorn) grew to 30 by 8 Aug (N. Gilbert) and the high count of 45+ by 21 Aug (J. McCormac); late were "several" there on 19 Oct (C. Bombaci), and the seven J. Lehman found at **Ottawa NWR** 18 Oct.

**Piping plover:** One was at **HBSP** 15 Aug for a first local Aug record. Another was photographed at **Alum Ck Res** 31 Aug.

**Killdeer:** Began massing by 2 Aug, with 170+ at **Hoover** (R. Thorn). The high count was 700+ at **BCSP** 14 Oct, where 140 remained 4 Nov (both D. Overacker). Elsewhere, 426 strolled **Berlin Res** 6 Sep, with 52 on 11 Nov (both B. Morrison), 354 were near **Wooster** 19 Sept (S. Snyder), and as many as 260 at **Dillon Res** on 20 Nov (J. Estep).

**American avocet:** A significant incursion of 35-40, about half away from the Lake, in *Ashtabula, Pickaway, Warren, Butler, Ottawa, Delaware, Lorain, Erie, Seneca* (first record *fide* T. Bartlett), *Hancock*, and *Trumbull*. Larger counts included six at **Caesar Ck SP** 15 Aug (L. Gara), six at **Hoover Res** 16 Aug (C. Bombaci), and five at **Conneaut** 16 Aug (G. Meszaros); Nov sightings included one at **BCSP** the 4<sup>th</sup> (D. Overacker), one at **HWSP** as late as 18 Nov (B. Pratt), and two at **Mosquito Ck Lk** 20 Nov (B. Smith *fide* M. Vass).

**Greater yellowlegs:** The high count of 66 came on the 6 Nov **ONWRC**, with a late bird on 20 Nov (**Mosquito Ck Lk**, B. Smith *fide* M. Vass).

**Lesser yellowlegs:** Not extravagantly numerous, with high counts of 129 on the **ONWR** censuses of both 7 Aug and 4 Sep, and a late date of 12 Nov at **BCSP** (B. Whan).

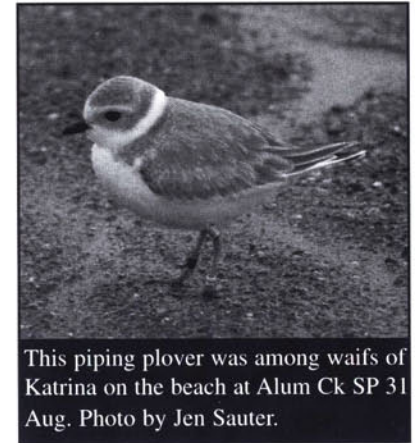
**Solitary sandpiper:** Twenty was the high count, from *Columbiana* 28 Sep (B&D Lane). The latest was found at Veteran's Park in **Mentor** 14 Oct (L. Rosche).

**Willet:** Another nice flight, with 51 birds reported, in *Ashtabula, Warren, Delaware, Erie, Ottawa, Lucas, Lake, and Sandusky*. Forty were found in August, and the only October bird occurred on the 18<sup>th</sup> at **ONWR** (P. Rodewald). High counts were five willets at **Hoover Res** 8 Aug (C. Bombaci), six at **LSR** 5 Sep (J. Pogacnik), and 13 at **Conneaut** 27 Aug (W. Shaffer).

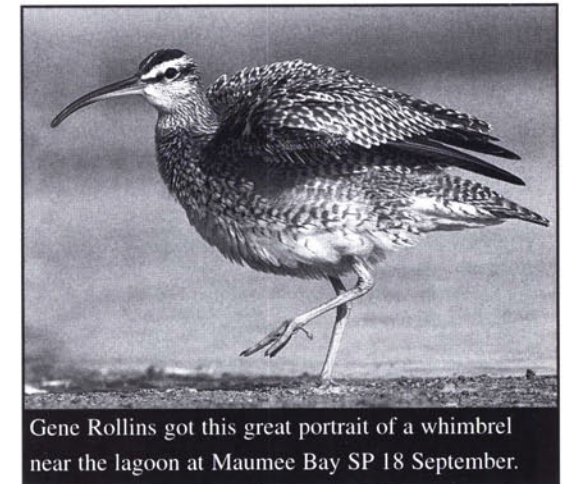
**Spotted sandpiper:** The high count was 25+ at **Hoover Res** 21 Aug (J. McCormac).

**Upland sandpiper:** M&D Dunakin found nine at a dairy farm in *Paulding* 2 Aug, and one at another location in the county 13 Sep. The 7 Aug **ONWRC** had one, and T. Kemp another in *e. Lucas* 26 Aug.

**Whimbrel:** An average movement, with single birds at **Hoover Res** 2 and 8 Aug (R. Thorn, C. Bombaci), at **Conneaut** 5 and 28 Aug (B. Royse, W. Shaffer), one at **Huron** 27 Aug (J. Pogacnik), and one or perhaps two birds at **MBSP** 18-30 Sep (G. Rollins, D. Bollin).

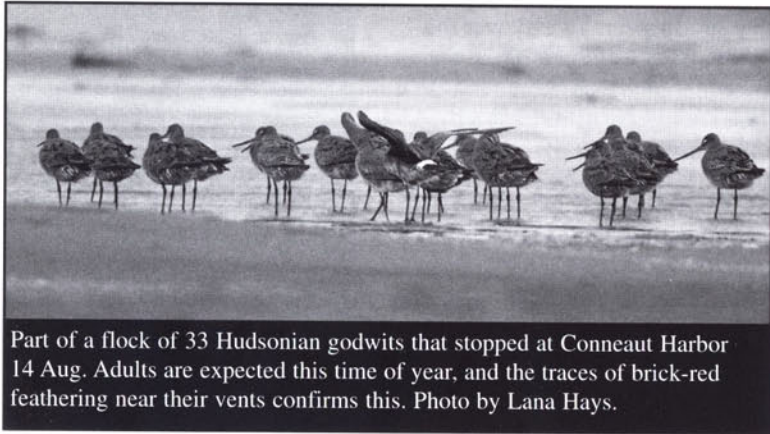


This piping plover was among waifs of Katrina on the beach at Alum Ck SP 31 Aug. Photo by Jen Sauter.



Gene Rollins got this great portrait of a whimbrel near the lagoon at Maumee Bay SP 18 September.

**Hudsonian godwit:** A nice flight of 85 birds, most of it coming from two big flocks, one of 33 adults at **Conneaut** 14 Aug (L. Hays, ph) and another of 24 at **ONWR** 28 Aug (J. Brumfield). Reports came from **Ashtabula, Lucas, Delaware, Ottawa, Portage, and Wyandot**. **Hoover Res** was most consistent, with from one to nine birds present from 19 Aug (P. Gardner) through 8 Sep (C. Bombaci).



Part of a flock of 33 Hudsonian godwits that stopped at Conneaut Harbor 14 Aug. Adults are expected this time of year, and the traces of brick-red feathering near their vents confirms this. Photo by Lana Hays.

**Marbled godwit:** Over twenty reported, with high counts of seven at **Ottawa NWR** 4 Sep (C. Caldwell) and five at **Hoover Res** 21 Aug (C. Bombaci), where marbled godwits persisted through 8 Sep (Bombaci). All other reports were of one or two along the Lake, the latest of two 1 Oct at **ONWR** (E. Tramer).

**Ruddy turnstone:** Not a good showing, with the most reported only seven (**Conneaut** 31 Aug, J. Pogacnik). The latest was at **West Branch SP** in **Portage** 23 Oct (G. Bennett).

**Red knot:** Twenty-five reported, mostly single birds and two reports of three (**Conneaut**, 31 Aug, J. Pogacnik, and **ONWR**, 13 Aug, J. Shieldcastle). Most reports emanated from these two spots, but one was at **Pickerington Ponds** 24 Aug (John Watts), and another at **Hoover** 12 Aug (B. Whan).

**Sanderling:** Numbers seemed down. All reports came from the **Lake Erie shore** (led by 86 at **Conneaut** 31 Aug, J. Pogacnik), except for 10 birds at **Hoover** 8 Aug (C. Bombaci) and 13 at **BCSP** 25 Sep (D. Overacker).

**Semipalmated sandpiper:** Reported numbers were low for this species as well, except for 1290 at **Conneaut** during the extraordinary grounding of 31 Aug (J. Pogacnik).

**Western sandpiper:** Twenty-four reported, with about half inland. The high count was four at **Hoover** 6 (C. Bombaci) and 8 (J. Kuenzli) Aug.

**Least sandpiper:** The **ONWRC** of 7 Aug found 279, but the next highest number was only 120 at **Hoover** 21 Aug (J. McCormac), and the flight, while solid, was anything but dramatic.

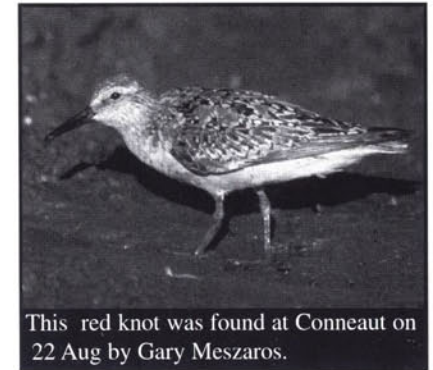
**White-rumped sandpiper:** A few along the **Lake**, a few at shorebird spots inland (**Hoover, BCSP, Berlin Res**), all of them dwarfed by 355 on a remarkable 31 Aug at **Conneaut** (J. Pogacnik). Last reported 14 Oct at **BCSP** (D. Overacker).

**Baird's sandpiper:** Much like the previous, with reports of small numbers at the usual spots, headed by 11 at **Hoover** 26 Aug (B. McNulty), and a large cohort of 69 grounded at **Conneaut** on 31 Aug (J. Pogacnik). B. Royse reported two ad (with four juv) as late as 24 Aug, at **Conneaut**.

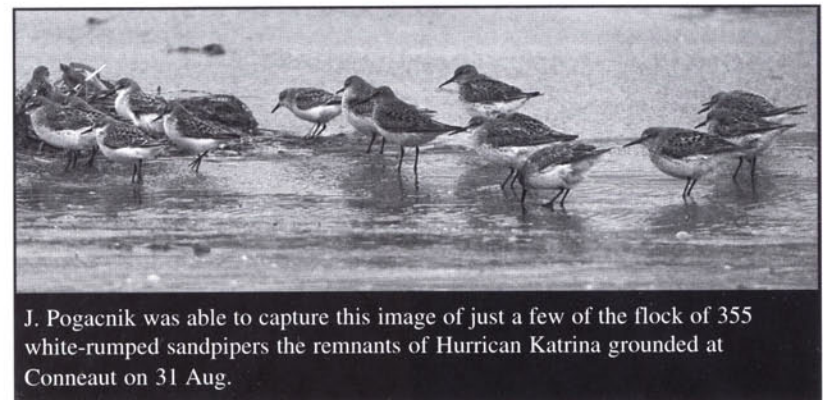
**Pectoral sandpiper:** Lakeshore habitats were seemingly unfavorable for this species, which seemed to have found the short grass and mud at **Hoover** hospitable, where the high count of 200+ came from 22 Aug (R. Thorn), and double figures persisted for weeks. No November reports were received.

**Purple sandpiper:** Reports from the lighthouse breakwall at **HBSP** emerged of two birds 26 Nov (*vide* L. Rosche), one 27 Nov (*vide* J. Brumfield), and two on the 30<sup>th</sup> (G. Meszaros), quite possibly the same pair. D. Sanders found one on the **Huron Harbor** wall on 27 No

**Dunlin:** One for the 7 Aug **ONWRC** must have been a failed breeder or suspended migrant; one or two is found yearly. Three among the stunned throngs 31 Aug at **Conneaut** (J. Pogacnik) must have been unwilling early arrivals. As usual, **Ottawa NWR** produced the high count, 3040 on 6 Nov (ONWRC).



This red knot was found at Conneaut on 22 Aug by Gary Meszaros.



J. Pogacnik was able to capture this image of just a few of the flock of 355 white-rumped sandpipers the remnants of Hurricane Katrina grounded at Conneaut on 31 Aug.



**Stilt sandpiper:** Hard to find in the NW marshes this fall, stilts were reported in small numbers from many inland locales. **Medusa Marsh**, during the period when its water was appropriate in depth, attracted the lion's share of this species, where the high count of 186 was made on 5 Sep (S. Zadar)

**Buff-breasted sandpiper:** With ~ 75 detected, some apparently undertaking lengthy stopovers, in **Delaware, Hardin, Hancock, Lucas, Ashtabula, Clark, Ottawa,** and **Hamilton**, it was a fine flight. The high count by far was 30+ in one area of **Hoover Res** on Katrina's day, 31 Aug (C. Bombaci). One to five disarmingly tame juveniles were to be found at the **MBSP beach parking lot** from 28 Aug-18 Sep (see article this issue). The whole passage took place between 16 Aug (when G. Meszaros found three ad and one juv at **Conneaut**) and 24 Sep (when B. McNulty found the last juv at **Hoover**).

**Ruff:** One was spotted at **Medusa** 17 Sep. Two for the **ONWRC** came on 2 Oct, and a female was at the **GLSM fish hatchery** 29-30 Oct. Details with the OBRC.

**Short-billed dowitcher:** Anything but a spectacular passage, with few inland reports and a high count of only 99 (7 Aug **ONWRC**).

**Long-billed dowitcher:** Sixty-odd reported. With a high count of 34 for the 4 Sep **ONWRC** (diminishing to only seven for the 2 Oct census), one wonders if the big flocks of molting birds in autumn will return. Still smaller numbers were reported at **MWW** 1 Aug (J. Lehman), **Hoover** 17 Aug (C. Bombaci) and 20 Oct (R. Thorn), **Mosquito** 14 Oct (C. Holt), **Lorain** 30 Oct (J. Pogacnik), **Lake** 10 Nov (Pogacnik), and **Caesar Ck SP** 11 Nov (N. Cade).

**Wilson's snipe:** When you see one snipe in fall, others can usually be found nearby. Five were at the old Coliseum site in **Summit** 26 Oct (G. Leidy), and another five at **BCSP** on 4 Nov (D. Overacker). J. Yochum found 32 in **Williams** on 14 Nov, and J. Estep 45 at **Dillon Res** 20 Nov.

**Wilson's phalarope:** Twenty-three were found, with highs of six at **Medusa Marsh** 4 Sep (S. Young) and five at **BIWA** 12 Sep (V. Fazio), a location where this species has nested in the recent past. Other birds were in **Williams** (1 Aug, 7 Sep, J. Yochum), **Hoover** (8&23 Aug, R. McNulty, C. Bombaci), **Lucas** (11 Aug, E. Tramer), **ONWR** (13 Aug, J. Shieldcastle; 28 Aug, J. Dunn), and at **Pickrel Ck WA** 20 Aug (C. Caldwell).

**Red-necked phalarope:** Twenty-two reported, most in an eight-day span. Two were at **Medusa** 25 Aug (B. Bowman), and 1-3 there through 16 Sep (m obs). One at **ONWR** 27 Aug (E. Tramer) was followed by five there for the census of 4 Sep. The phenomenal date of 31 Aug found five at **Conneaut** (J. Pogacnik), one at **CPNWR** (Tramer), three at **Knox Lk** (J. Larson), and one at **West Branch Res** (G. Bennett). S. Gray observed two down in **Ross** the following day.

**Red phalarope:** Juveniles showed up at **EFSP** 8 Oct (D. Morse), at **Lorain** 16 Oct (G. Bennett), in **Columbus** 20 Oct (B. Royse), at **HBSP** 26 Oct (R. Hannikman *vide* S. Wagner), and at **Fairport Hbr** 6 Nov (J. Pogacnik).

**Pomarine jaeger:** Four of these big pirates appeared late in the period: two dark juveniles at **HBSP** 14 Nov (B. Morrison), an imm dark morph at **LSR** 25 Nov (J. Pogacnik), and one at **HBSP** 26 Nov (B. Sparks).

**Parasitic jaeger:** Two imm reported, one at **LSR** 30 Oct, and another at **EHSP** 26 Nov.

**Jaeger sp.:** At **EFSP** in **Clermont**, a young, fairly large jaeger was seen 31 Aug (W. Hull, B. Foppe). P. Lozano was able to identify two distant jaegers only as to genus, seen in **Rocky River** 25 Oct and 28 Nov.

**Laughing gull:** A second-year bird was at a **Findlay Res** 30 Aug (S. Myers)-2 Sep (R. Counts). J. McCormac found two at **Alum Ck Res** 31 Aug. D. Overacker had another second-year bird at **BCSP** 2 Sep. Two juveniles, molting into first basic, showed up at **Caesar Ck SP** 4 Sep (L. Gara). Another was found there 16-18 Sep (R. Asamoto, followed by another juvenile 23 Sep (J. Lehman), which apparently remained through 30 Sep (Gara), with two present on 1-2 Oct (Gara). J&B Cullen found one in **Grand Rapids, Wood** 23 Oct. **Findlay Res** hosted another, or perhaps two, 18 & 25 Oct (B. Hardesty). None was reported from Lake Erie.



This laughing gull in first basic plumage from 16 Sep is one of four or five that showed up at Caesar Ck SP this fall. This shot by Rick Asamoto shows the banded tail.

**Franklin's gull:** Not many this fall. Rickard found a juv at **Conneaut** 18 Sep. P. Sherwood had a Franklin's at **ONWR** 14 Oct. At **Caesar Ck SP**, a juv was found 7 Oct (R. Asamoto), and two there the following day (L. Gara), with one remaining 10 Oct (B. Powell).

**Little gull:** The first, a second-winter bird, found at **Conneaut** 24 Aug (B. Royle), continued through at least 1 Sep (M. Studebaker). An adult was at **Kelleys Isl** 26 Aug (P. Chaon). C. Holt found three (two juv, one 2<sup>nd</sup>-winter) at **Conneaut** 4 Sep. R. Rickard had a juv there 18 Sep, with Royle reporting the same 20 Sep. An adult flew by **LSR** 23 Oct (J. Pogacnik), an imm was at **HBSP** 24 Oct (J. Lehman), and a little gull there 26 Oct (R. Hannikman *vide* S. Wagner).

**Bonaparte's gull:** At **Sheldon Marsh**, ~3500, most adults, roosted on the flats 23 Aug (B. Whan). Many moved south and east in Nov: ~1000 were seen at **Conneaut** the 4<sup>th</sup> (C. Holt), ~700 at **Mosquito Lk** on the 9<sup>th</sup> (J. Hochadel), and over a thousand at **Hoover** on the 28<sup>th</sup> (C. Bombaci).

**Ring-billed gull:** Young birds seemed to bail out early, with ~500 at **Deer Ck Res** 23 Oct (B. Royle), and ~1500 at **Mosquito Lk** 9 Nov (J. Hochadel).

**Thayer's gull:** Curiously, an adult was found in a field south of **Oberlin** on 6 Nov (R&S Harlan).

**Lesser black-backed gull:** A third-year bird was at **Lorain** 7 Aug (J. Pogacnik). C. Holt found one at **Conneaut** 4 Sep. L. Rosche encountered three at **Camp Perry (Ottawa)** 28 Sep. R&S Harlan saw one s. of **Oberlin** 6 Nov, and J. Pogacnik another at **LSR** 24 Nov.

**Glaucous gull:** Reported were a 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>-year from **LSR** 24 Nov (J. Pogacnik) and one at **Eastlake** 26 Nov (B. Sparks).

**Sabine's gull:** A first-year bird was found at **Conneaut** with other waifs of the storm on 31 Aug, a record early date (J. Pogacnik), for the only report of the season.

**Black-legged kittiwake:** Immature birds were seen on 11 Nov at **Conneaut** (T. Hochstetler), 24 Nov at **LSR** (J. Pogacnik), 26 Nov at **HBSP** (B. Sparks et al.).

**Caspian tern:** Ten reached **Hoover Res** by 2 Aug (R Thorn), and 57 **ONWR** by 7 Aug (ONWRC).

**Common tern:** The **ONWR** census had 216 on 7 Aug, 511 on 4 Sep, and 1660 on 2 Oct. The 8/31 **Conneaut** phenomenon featured 840 common terns. K. Kaufman estimated 1500-1600 on the **MBSP** beach 6 Sep, and also reported the latest, 21 Nov over **Metzger Marsh**.

**Forster's tern:** Four birds hunted **Metzger Res** in **Lima** on 6 Aug (D. Dister). The census at **ONWR** found 230 on 7 Aug, 41 on 4 Sep, and 830 on 2 Oct. K. Kaufman saw 400-500 at **MBSP** 6 Sep, and two remained at **West Hbr** 27 Nov (J. Pogacnik).

**Black tern:** Reports of 211 terns spanned 30 days (8/5-9/4) plus one later oddball, a basic-plumaged bird that showed up at **Lk Rupert** in **Vinton** on 8 Sep (D. Dister). The passage of Hurricane Katrina on 28 Aug brought 153 of these birds, all but three at inland reservoirs.

**White-winged dove:** A group following the **ONWR** auto tour on 17 Sep came across one, and got a photo. Details are with the OBRC; this would be the third Ohio record.

**Black-billed cuckoo:** Both cuckoos continued more numerous this fall; on 27 Sep G. Cottier reported 7-10 migrants in **Toledo's Oak Openings**.

**Yellow-billed cuckoo:** Good numbers. One with a fledgling at **Magee** (B. Zwiebel) was not out of line for the species as late as 28 Aug. Quite late were reports from **Sandy Ridge MP** in **Lorain** 4 Nov (J. Kolo-Rose, ph) and **Dike 14** on 11 Nov (T. Hochstetler).

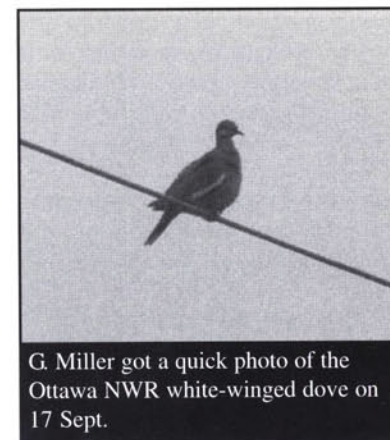
**Long-eared owl:** Seven roosted 26 Nov at **KPWA** (J. Brumfield).

**Short-eared owl:** Numbers were down, or birds were at least late in returning to favored locales of recent years. First reported 17 Oct in **Findlay** (B. Hardesty), one was briefly at **MBSP** 20 Nov (P. Chad), and two had found **Crown City WA (Gallia/Lawrence)** by 25 Nov (D. Patick).

**Northern saw-whet owl:** Twelve were captured for banding on **Kelleys Isl** this fall, and 17 in **Seneca** Oct-Dec (T. Bartlett). The **Ross** banding operation caught their first on 17 Oct, and had 33 new owls and ten recaptures for the season, from the latter learning that one stayed in the area a minimum of 31 days (K. Sieg). Interestingly, this year they heard owls on 16 of 24 nights; since it is unlikely **Ross Co** is Ohio's hotbed of saw-whets, this suggests that the rest of us ought to go out and listen more often this time of year, mindful that the vocalizations of saw-whets are more varied than many recordings suggest.

**Common nighthawk:** Close to 2000 migrants reported between late Aug and mid-Oct. **Cincinnati**-area observers were inspired to report by large movements (including the seasonal high of 500+ at **Winton Wds** by J. Stenger) associated with the 31 Aug passage of the eye of Katrina, and by a later wave 21-23 Sep. Latest were 18 over an alert **Cincinnati** on 13 Oct (W. Hull).

**Chuck-will's-widow:** One was still singing in **Adams** 29 Aug (R. McCarty).



G. Miller got a quick photo of the Ottawa NWR white-winged dove on 17 Sept.

**Whip-poor-will:** Four still called in the **Oak Openings** of **Toledo** 5 Sep (E. Tramer).

**Chimney swift:** As nest sites for this species disappear, fall roosts draw ever more attention. In the **Columbus** area, for example, many roosts of 400+ were reported between 5 Aug and 12 Oct (R. Thorn), with a high of ~1400, 13 Sep (B. Conlon).

**Green violet-ear:** A bird was photographed at a feeder in **Holmes** 16 Aug, but did not return; see article in this issue. This species is now annual in Texas, and last season was also recorded in Iowa, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey.

**Ruby-throated hummingbird:** Feeders who fretted about ruby-throats over the summer noticed a distinct spike in their numbers in early Aug; the **ONWRC** counted a record 74 on the 7<sup>th</sup>, mostly female/immature. Five adult males remained at **LSR** as late as 31 Aug (J. Pogacnik), and the latest report came from 14 Oct in **Youngstown** (S. Butcher).

**Anna's hummingbird:** On 12 Nov, a hummingbird arrived at a **West Chester (Butler)** feeder, and only in the period to come was identified as an Anna's hummingbird, probably a female; if accepted by the **OBRC**, this will be our first record of this species.

**Rufous hummingbird:** All the following were either examined and photographed in hand during banding (A. Chartier), or accompanied by diagnostic photos. Adult males were in **Marysville, Union** (19 Aug-29 Sep), **Bellefontaine, Logan** (5-19 Nov), and **Zanesville, Muskingum** (9-18 Oct; this was probably the same bird that visited this same feeder in 2003 and 2004). Adult females were identified in **Wadsworth, Medina** (9 Oct-7 Nov), in **Carrollton, Carroll** (29 Oct-26 Nov), and near **Pickerington** in **Fairfield** (2-13 Nov), and an immature male (4 Nov-eop) just 2-3 miles from the female found earlier in **Wadsworth, Medina**. Low temps may have prompted unaccountably early departures this fall, with only three persisting into December.

**Selasphorus, sp:** Reports of rufous/Allen's hummingbirds came from **Licking** on 6 Aug, **Lake** on 7 Aug, **Mahoning** 17 Nov (ph), rural **Knox** 30 Sep-13 Oct (ph), **Delaware** late Sep-11 Nov (ph), **Franklin** 12 Nov-eop (ph), **Brown** 20 Nov (ph), **Lawrence** 29 Aug-eop (ph), and another possible one in **Licking** late Oct-22 Nov (ph).

**Pileated woodpecker:** Re-establishing a foothold in **Lucas, Toledo**-area pairs are now known in **Oak Openings** and **Secor** parks, a single bird at **Pearson MP**, and a probable pair at **Wildwood MP** (*vide* E. Tramer).

**Olive-sided flycatcher:** Well-reported, with 26 birds 23 Aug-28 Sep statewide.

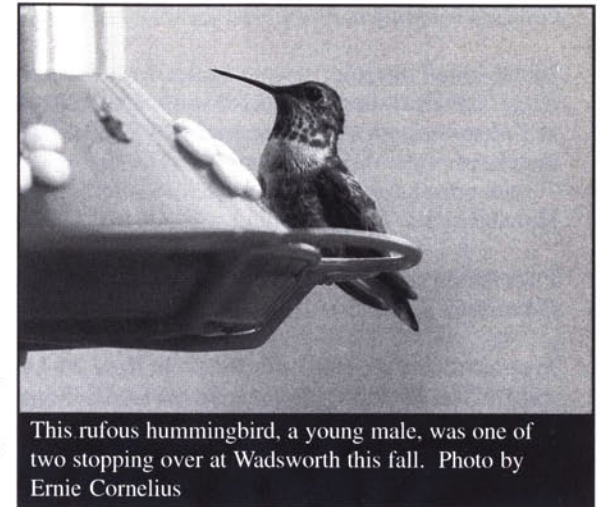
**Yellow-bellied flycatcher:** On the late side was one banded at **Navarre** 2 Oct (BSBO)

**Acadian flycatcher:** A late bird was banded at **Shawnee Lookout** 24 Sep (L. Peyton).

**Willow flycatcher:** Latest reported was one in **Summit** 14 Sep (R&S Harlan).

**Least flycatcher:** Three were lateish 15 Sep at **Firestone MP** in **Akron** 15 Sep (R&S Harlan).

**Gray flycatcher:** Skilled observers reported finding one at **HBSP** on 18 Sep, for what if accepted would be Ohio's second record of this western *Empidonax* flycatcher.



This rufous hummingbird, a young male, was one of two stopping over at Wadsworth this fall. Photo by Ernie Cornelius

**Eastern phoebe:** Fifteen were found in **Shawnee SF** in **Scioto** 18 Oct (B. Royse); one remained in **Wilmot, Stark** 23 Nov (P. Soehnlen).

**Great crested flycatcher:** Seen as late as 16 Sep, in **Franklin** (R. Thorn).

**Western kingbird:** One was reported from **Lake** 2 Oct. Details with the **OBRC**.

**Eastern kingbird:** No report after one on 10 Sep from the **CVNP** census (D. Chasar).

**Northern shrike:** An imm was at **Killdeer** 29 Oct (S. Myers) for the first. The southernmost reported came from **GLSM** 12 Nov (D. Dister).

**White-eyed vireo:** Late was one at **HBSP** 11 Nov (ph, S. Isacco), and later still one at **Mentor Lagoons** 14 Nov (L. Rosche).

**Yellow-throated vireo:** High count seven at **Shawnee Lookout** in **Cincinnati** 7 Sep (J. Stenger). A late bird was also in **Hamilton** 4 Oct (F. Renfrow).

**Blue-headed vireo:** Suspiciously early was one in **Ross** 12 Aug (K. Sieg). Our hardest vireo, one was also quite late: 10 Nov in **Holmes** (E. Schlabach).

**Warbling vireo:** Several reported lingering, but one found in eastern **Lucas** on 8 Nov is apparently a new record late date for Ohio (B. Zwiebel).

**Philadelphia vireo:** Judging by reports, a fine flight this fall; the 4 Sep **ONWRC** saw three. The latest was banded at **Navarre** by the **BSBO** 13 Oct.

**Red-eyed vireo:** Late enough was one on **Kelleys Isl** 16 Oct (T. Bartlett), but one well seen by K Metcalf at **N. Chagrin Resn** 10 Nov was among the half-dozen latest known.

**Black-billed magpie:** Two magpies were found in **Damascus, Mahoning** 28 Aug. The birds disappeared for some time, but were relocated some miles away in **Columbiana**, and seen by m obs 29 Sep-14 Oct. See account in this issue by Bob Lane.

**Horned lark:** The high count was 500+ in **Mahoning** 24 Nov (B&D Lane).

**Purple martin:** J. Stenger noted ~2250 migrants 24 Aug over **Winton Wds, Hamilton**.

**Tree swallow:** D. Hess saw 1000+ in **Ross** 20 Aug for a good count. In another wave, ~700 birds, mostly juveniles, were in **Wayne** 3 Oct (R. Troutman). The latest reported, a single lingering bird, came from just **e. of Conneaut** on 16 Nov (V. Fazio).

**Northern rough-winged swallow:** Not a big flocker, 100+ were at the Fernald site in **Butler** 17 Sep (J. Bens). Two lingered as late as 29 Oct at **BCSP** (D. Overacker).

**Bank swallow:** E. Tramer counted 5142 at **CPNWR** 20 Aug. One found at **Conneaut** 16 Nov (V. Fazio) constitutes a new late state record for the species.

**Cliff swallow:** R. Thorn reported the last of the **Columbus**-area nesters departed by 8 Aug. Fifteen were at **MWW** by the 17<sup>th</sup> (P. Wharton). Exceedingly tardy was one at **Caesar Ck SP** 18 Oct (B. Powell).

**Cave swallow:** *Petrochelidon fulva* has increased rapidly in regular late fall dispersals to the NE states, and this year was the most dramatic, with numbers peaking at 579 at a Lk Ontario site in New York on 7 Nov. Based on established patterns, observers in NE Ohio were on the alert for them along the **Lake Erie shore**, and on 5 Nov a group saw well at least one among a stream of 14 swallows at **Perry Park** in **Lake** (ph). Increased vigilance led to further discoveries: 35-40 headed west 6 Nov at the same location, and small groups in **Fairport Hbr**. On 12 Nov, one was reported at **Conneaut**, and another at **Perry Park**, with one in **Bay Village** the following day. Other locales in **Lake** produced reports 13 and 14 Nov, with one at **Conneaut** on 16 Nov. On 20 Nov an alert homeowner discovered one dead on a front porch in **Lakewood**; the corpse was taken to the Cleveland Museum of Natural History; it was reportedly of the southwestern race *P. f. pelodoma*. If accepted, this will be a new bird for the Ohio list (see note in this issue).

**Barn swallow:** Last straggler reported on 26 Oct, on **Delaware Res** (B. Shively).

**Tufted titmouse:** **Kelleys Island's** fourth record in the past 20 years came on 30 Oct (T. Bartlett). B. Morrison reported a near-total albino in **Stark** 29 Oct, with pink soft parts and completely white in plumage save for faint shadowing on nape and shoulders.

**Red-breasted nuthatch:** A marked incursion. R. Royse reported 18 Oct that all hemlock groves and some pine groves in **Shawnee SF, Scioto**, harbored this species. The 10 Sep **CVNP** census had 44 red-breasteds to 100 white-breasteds. Four southwestern counties contributed 40 reports of this species during the period.

**Brown creeper:** BSBO reported record numbers of birds netted at **Navarre:** 118 from 24 Sep-18 Oct. On 20 Oct, C. Bombaci had 10 at **Hoover**, and B. Shively eight at nearby **Delaware WA**.

**Winter wren:** Reported in better numbers than usual. R. Thorn tallied 28 11-13 Oct in **Columbus**, and K. Kaufman 12+ at **EHSP** 22 Nov, for examples.

**Sedge wren:** Eleven for the 7 Aug **ONWRC** was high, with many singing males during the month. Quite late was one at **MWW** 27 Nov (W. Hull).

**Golden-crowned kinglet:** BSBO reported a record 783 netted 23 Sep-29 Oct at **Navarre**. On 8 Oct, A. Boone estimated 275 birds on **Kelleys Isl**.

**Ruby-crowned kinglet:** BSBO banded 676 at **Navarre** 23 Sep-29 Oct. A. Boone's estimate from **Kelleys Isl** on 8 Oct was 225.

**Blue-gray gnatcatcher:** One in **Valley View, Clermont** 31 Oct was very late (B. Foppe).

**Veery:** E. Tramer noted 15+ overhead in **Lucas** 5 Sep. One 16 Oct at **MWW** was bringing up the rear of the migration (N. Keller et al.)

**Gray-cheeked thrush:** Thirteen were on **Kelleys Isl** 17 Sep (T. Bartlett), and one at **Sheldon Marsh** 18 Oct must have been among the last to depart (P. Rodewald).

**Swainson's thrush:** Flocks of ~50 were noted over the **Oak Openings** 5 Sep (E. Tramer) and in **Spr Grove Cem** in **Cincinnati** 17 Sep (L. Brumbaugh). Last reported was one in **Findlay** 18 Oct (*vide* B. Hardesty).

**Hermit thrush:** Known to break into song from time to time in fall, one was doing so in **Rocky River** 5 Oct (R&S Harlan). Eighty were tallied in **n. Toledo** 9 Oct (G. Links), and three were the last reported, on 27 Nov from **BCSP** (D. Overacker).

**Wood thrush:** At an odd time and place was one 15 Oct in **Cleveland's Erie St Cemetery** downtown (R&S Harlan).

**Gray catbird:** Birds persisting well into Nov in the north included one at **HBSP** on the 11<sup>th</sup> (S. Isacco) and another in **Paulding** through the 30<sup>th</sup> (M&D Dunakin).

**American pipit:** First noted 8 Sep at **MBSP** (B. Zwiebel), many stayed through the period, with a high count of 240 at **Berlin Res.** 21 Oct (B. Morrison).

**Blue-winged warbler:** Not loath to depart, the last was in **Coshocton** 19 Sep (L.E. Yoder).

**Golden-winged warbler:** Six were reported, half of them on the latest date of 16 Sep: one at **Blendon Wds MP** in **Columbus** (R. McNulty), a male at **Highbanks MP** in **Delaware**, and one in **Toledo** (R. Nirschl).

**"Brewster's Warbler":** L. E. Yoder found one in **Coshocton** 2 Sep.

**Tennessee warbler:** Came through beginning in late Aug, with a last sighting 16 Oct at **BCSP** (D. Overacker). L.E. Yoder had 59 in **Coshocton** 24 Sep.

**Orange-crowned warbler:** Fairly hardy, but seldom seen as late as that in **Worthington** 27 Nov (B. Master).

**Nashville warbler:** First seen 24 Aug (S. Wright) in **Cleveland**, and last fairly late in the **Oak Openings** of **Toledo** 12 Nov (G. Cottier).

**Yellow warbler:** Establishing a new late date for the **Toledo** area was one discovered at **CPNWR** on 12 Nov (E. Tramer).

**Magnolia warbler:** The latest reported passed through **Sheldon Marsh** 18 Oct (P. Rodewald).

**Cape May warbler:** A fairly hardy species, one was photographed at **Castalia** 19 Nov (B. Zwiebel).

**Black-throated blue warbler:** Pretty much on schedule, the last reported 17 Oct at **ONWR** (H. Ostermiller).

**Yellow-rumped warbler:** Remarkably early was one at **CPNWR** 20 Aug (E. Tramer). A. Boone reported ~170 on **Kelleys Island** on 8 Oct.

**Black-throated gray warbler:** An immature at **Akron's Firestone MP** on 22 Oct was written up for the OBRC.

**Black-throated green warbler:** The high count was 14 on 23 Sep in **Coshocton** (L.E. Yoder). The last passed through **Columbus**, on 27 Oct (R. Thorn).

**Blackburnian warbler:** The **ONWRC** had the high count, five on 14 Sep.

**Yellow-throated warbler:** One in **Columbus** 9 Oct was fairly late (R. Thorn).

**Pine warbler:** P. Rodewald had six in the two pines in his **Worthington** back yard 9 Oct. One came to B. Zwiebel's feeder in **e. Lucas** 20 Nov-eop.

**Prairie warbler:** Scarce as always in fall. One 18 Sep at **Caesar Ck SP** was likely a migrant (J. Lehman).

**Palm warbler:** Quite early was one near **Chillicothe** on 10 Aug (D. Hess); not correspondingly late was one in **Gahanna** 15 Nov (R. Lowry). A very yellow individual, probably of the eastern race, was seen at **CPNWR** 22 Oct (E. Tramer).

**Bay-breasted warbler:** L.E. Yoder tallied 10 in **Coshocton** 23 Sep for the high count. Late were 8 Oct birds in **Holmes** (E. Schlabach) and at **SVWA** (D. Overacker).

**Blackpoll warbler:** Seemed not so numerous as normal. One at **HBSP** on 26 Nov (R. Hannikman *vide* J. Brumfield) easily surpassed all other records as Ohio's latest.

**Cerulean warbler:** High count was three, at **Shawnee Lookout** 4 Sep (J. Stenger).

**American redstart:** The **ONWRC** encountered a straggler on 6 Nov.

**Prothonotary warbler:** Maximum was three, at **Magee** 20 Aug (C. Caldwell).

**Worm-eating warbler:** Three were a surprising find at **Spring Grove Cem** in **Cincinnati** 17 Sep (L. Brumbaugh).

**Ovenbird:** C. Witt witnessed six feeding on the sidewalks of **Cleveland's Public Square** 4 Oct.

**Northern waterthrush:** B.Zwiebel photographed an early arrival in **e. Lucas** 18 Aug, and E. Tramer found three at **CPNWR** two days later. BSBO banded one 16 Oct at **Navarre**.

**Louisiana waterthrush:** Seen as late as 6 Aug, at **N. Chagrin Resn** (K. Metcalf).

**Connecticut warbler:** The high count of two came at **Shawnee Lookout** 15 Sep (A. Bess).

**Mourning warbler:** Early was one 17 Aug at **LSR** (J. Pogacnik), and earlyish birds at the **Oak Openings** (E. Tramer) and in **Cleveland** 24 Aug (S. Wright). Last reported in **Cleveland** 10 Oct (J. Brumfield).

**Hooded warbler:** Closed out the season with one at **Erie St. Cem** 1 Oct (R. Rickard), one at **Mogadore Res** 2 Oct (G. Bennett), and two in **Coshocton** 3 Oct (E. Schlabach).

**Summer tanager:** Four were at **Shawnee Lookout** in **Hamilton** 4 Sep (J. Stenger). The last to depart the **Oak Openings** in **Lucas** was seen 17 Sep (E. Tramer).

**Scarlet tanager:** In **Coshocton**, L.E. Yoder had 13 on 23 Sep. The latest was banded 10 Oct at the **Shaker Lks** (BSBO).

**Eastern towhee:** Fifteen were tallied at **Mitchell Forest** in **Hamilton** 27 Aug (N. Cade).

**American tree sparrow:** First reported at the old Coliseum site in **Summit** 26 Oct (G. Leidy).

**Clay-colored sparrow:** One reported, at **N. Chagrin MP** 2 Oct by K. Metcalf (m obs).

**Field sparrow:** High count 20+ in **Franklin** 12 Oct (R. Thorn), with latest report the last week of Nov at **Lowellville** in **Mahoning** (C. Holt).

**Vesper sparrow:** High count of only two, 16 Oct in **Holmes** (E. Schlabach).

**Savannah sparrow:** R. Counts reported 200+ at one of the **Findlay Res** 10 Sep; 24+ could still be found 19 Nov, in **Butler** (M. Busam).

**Grasshopper sparrow:** One was discovered 18 Oct in **Holmes** (E. Schlabach).

**Henslow's sparrow:** Seven including one juv were at the **VOA** site in **Butler** 6 Aug (M. Busam).

**Le Conte's sparrow:** None reported.

**Nelson's sharp-tailed sparrow:** A surprising 20 reported, the first at **Arcola Ck** in **Lake** 28 Sep (J. Pogacnik). One was banded at **Navarre** 30 Sept (BSBO) and three at **MWW** the following day (D. Russell). One was captured and released in **Columbus** 24 Oct (A. Boone). Pogacnik found the last, at **Arcola**, on 28 Oct. E. Schlabach reported 6-9 in a wet field in **Tuscarawas** 1-15 Oct, with nine there 5 Oct, as well as one at **Funk** 4 Oct and other birds 7 and 13 Oct in **Holmes**.

**Lincoln's sparrow:** Very unusual was an arrival at **CPNWR** as early as 20 Aug (E. Tramer). A good flight, with many double-figure reports in Oct, but no Nov reports.

**Swamp sparrow:** The bulk moved through in October, when a substantial high count of 50+ was recorded at the **Shaker Lks** on the 10<sup>th</sup> (L. Deininger), but not so substantial as 124 from **MWW** on the 23<sup>rd</sup> (D. Brinkman).

**White-throated sparrow:** Arrived 10 Sep, with three at **HBSP** (R. Rickard) and three for the **CVNP** census (D. Chasar). High count ~300 at **Sheldon Marsh** 18 Oct (P. Rodewald).

**White-crowned sparrow:** Arrived rather early in the south, with one in **Clermont** 25 Sep (B. Stanley). D. Brinkman counted 82 at **MWW** 23 Oct.

**Dark-eyed junco:** Singles arrived 25 Sept, both at **CPNWR** (E. Tramer) and down in **Clermont** (B. Stanley).

**Lapland longspur:** With a count of 200+ on 5 Nov, R. Counts marked the sixth straight year of finding flocks in certain **n. Wyandot** fields.

**Snow bunting:** S. Isacco reported the first, at **HBSP** 19 Oct, where she had 15 by 24 Oct and 35-40 by 3 Nov. Several were at **Conneaut** 20 Oct (M. Studebaker), with 70 there 4 Nov (C. Holt).

**Rose-breasted grosbeak:** A family of four was observed down in **Ross** 10 Aug (D. Hess). High count was 15 migrating east at dawn in **Sandusky** 24 Sep (K. Metcalf). A female straggler was in **Akron** 30 Oct (S. Brown).

**Blue grosbeak:** In northern climes, E. Tramer reported for the **Oak Openings** an ad male 29 Aug, 5 Sep, and 7 Sep; a male and female 8 Sep, and then a male 10 & 14 Sep. A nest was found in **Hancock** 16 Aug, with two young present 23 Aug (B. Hardesty).

**Indigo bunting:** Two were in **Ross** as late as 6 Oct (D. Hess).

**Dickcissel:** Ten were singing in **s. Seneca** and **n. Wyandot** 6 Aug (R. Counts). One was found at the **VOA** site 14 Aug (M. Busam). The 7 Aug **ONWRC** found 13, and D. Friedman noted five on nearby **Krause Rd** 1 Sep.

**Bobolink:** In **Hancock**, 32 birds on 2 Aug were mostly molted to basic (B. Hardesty), as were 21 at the **VOA** on 6 Aug (M. Busam). E. Schlabach reported 30 on 5 Oct in **Tuscarawas**, and four there 15 Oct. G. Leidy saw a straggler at the **Summit** Coliseum site 26 Oct.

**Red-winged blackbird:** The 6 Nov **ONWRC** estimated 34,000 on the refuge.

**Yellow-headed blackbird:** J. Bixler saw one on 17 Aug near Muddy Ck in **Ottawa**, near where the species often nests at **Winous Pt**; J. Pogacnik noted an ad male at **MBSP** 26 Nov.

**Rusty blackbird:** All reports came from October, the largest of them of ~100 birds in wetlands near **Deer Ck WA** on the 26<sup>th</sup> (B. Royse).

**Brewer's blackbird:** No reports from the NW, but J. Heflich and J. Evans had one in Troy Twp of **Geauga** 5 Nov, standing on a horse's back.

**Orchard oriole:** Given to early departure, one was reported from *Tuscarawas* on 7 Aug (E. Schlabach).

**Baltimore oriole:** In the **Oak Openings**, 35 could be found 20 Aug, with the last on the way out 12 Sep (E. Tramer).

**Purple finch:** Widely reported in small numbers in unglaciated and NE Ohio.

**House finch:** Unusual these days, a flock of 40 was noted in **Clinton, Summit**, on 26 Sep (R&S Harlan).

**Pine siskin:** G. Hostetler found six in **Wooster** 22 Oct. F. Losi counted 75 in two foraging groups at **Perry Pk** in *Lake* 5 Nov, where B. Glick relocated 25 on the 7<sup>th</sup>.

**American goldfinch:** B. Royse reported 500+ in a sunflower field near **Deer Ck WA** 26 Oct. R. Counts had an ad male in complete breeding plumage 23 Nov in **Upper Sandusky**.

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Drawing by Bill Shively

## A Primer on Birdsmanship

*Rob Harlan is on leave, and will have one of his "Further Afield" columns in our next issue, so we prevailed upon a British colleague for a guest column offering some instruction in a pastime becoming popular in the U.S. -- Ed.*

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**B**irdsmen are reporting ever more beginners in our midst, some of whom have sought our advice on how to sharpen their skills. Perhaps the time has come to offer these eager youngsters more than just another demonstration of the art out in the field. Here we offer, however sketchily (some techniques are being tested, and hence not yet ready to disclose), an exposition of some of birdsmanship's first principles, derived from my experiences in the States.

To those birdsmen\* who fear that public revelations of their manoeuvres may put them at a disadvantage, I can only say they harbour far too low an opinion of our sport. A wider familiarity with the game's rules and etiquette can only improve the play, and with it the satisfaction of winning. Nor should the necessary incompleteness of what we present here daunt us. We have only to set our feet on the right path, confident that the community of birdsmen will continue the advance. If we of the present day may in some ways see farther, we do so only by standing on the shoulders of the giants who taught us in days gone by.

How to begin? That there are fundamental principles to be discovered in the complex and subtle interplay that enlivens the pastime of birding can scarcely be denied.

At the same time there are those who worry, with some justification, that laying out these principles in a systematic way might deprive birdsmanship of its delightful spontaneity, and even encourage the appearance of an entire new cohort of practitioners with an all too mechanical devotion to the craft. We must therefore steer between twin hazards: the Scylla of mere accumulations of anecdotes, however enlightening, on the one hand, and the Charybdis of style-cramping dogmatism on the other.

We will begin, as directed by Aristotle (an accomplished birdsmanship in his own right), with definitions. Simply put, birdsmanship is the art of seeming a much better birder than one really is. As performance, birdsmanship must of course be social, and requires an audience, real or implied. Because theirs is an art rather than a science, skilled birdsmen are able to disguise their own ignorance, deftly outplaying those who are merely better birders. Even when

\*We do not apologize for using the term "birdsmen" to refer to birdsmen both masculine and feminine. "Man" comes from the well of Old English undefiled, and means, like the German *Mensch*, simply "human being." If our brothers can find no better word than "male" to denote their sex, so be it.

the birdsmanship actually knows something, he may disguise that knowledge, preferring instead to enlist the allegiance readily granted to the underdog.

My own ambition was first fired when as a young tourist I was privileged to watch the accomplished birdsmanship Phoebe Dunnock out-duel a widely-admired but rather smug expert, whose name I will not here reveal. The backdrop was a reeking mudflat in Florida Bay, where a crowd—composed of individual birders and a large tour group led by Expert—was scanning multitudes of feeding waders. As Expert confidently called off the names of species present, Dunnock reacted to each new find with a barely audible "hmm" of mild pleasure—or perhaps it was mild surprise—briefly regarding each bird through a curious pair of inordinately bulky old field glasses. Inevitably, a skirmish ensued.

*Expert (pointing, an incautious excitement entering his voice):*  
 Flamingos!

*Dunnock: Really? Are they right or left of the spoonbills?*

*Expert (a bit impatiently, warding off any impression he'd made an elementary error):* No, over here, on the horizon. You can barely make them out in the heat-haze. Look, you can see the black flight feathers when they lift their wings!

*Dunnock: Ah yes, way out there... I wonder which species they are?*

*Expert (now with a sharp glance at Dunnock):* Which species?

*Dunnock: Well, aren't there several flamingo species in zoos around here? I'm a bit rusty on some of them, I'm afraid. (Then, with good-natured humour) Maybe somebody could shinny up one of those palm trees far enough to get a good look at the legs....*

I knew Dunnock had never in fact seen a flamingo outside of the captive ones at the Bronx Zoo, and that she had probably been bewildered by many of the shorebirds present, but in a revelatory flash I recognized her cunning hint that Expert had made a too-hasty identification of what might, furthermore, be only birds of any of several exotic species escaped from some racetrack or the well-groomed grounds of a stately home, thus subtly ruining his moment. I saw him actually take a half-hearted step toward the nearest palms before trying to recover with a review of salient field-marks, which ploy Dunnock of course deftly countered by congratulating him on his discovery, while commiserating that the birds were so difficult to see well. A small victory, you may say, but on the walk back I overheard beginners in the group asking Dunnock's help with soaring vultures, and Expert grew more grumpy and subdued as the morning wore on, further underscoring her success.

Well illustrated here in Dunnock's play is the first great principle of our art, that *birdsmanship play only with other birdsmanship, or with their betters*. No true birdsmanship will be so crassly impolite as to embarrass a beginner, or avail herself of any crude advantage of genuine expertise. Underlying this practice is the twin principle that *the best birdsmanship is the best sportsman*. Among other things, this means that the birdsmanship will always behave more courteously than rivals, and conspicuously so. Stephen Potter, that great expositor of birdsmanship, illustrates this precept well when, speaking of other games, he states that the golfer, seeking an advantage by stalling play, must never do so by searching at length for his *own* ball in a rough, but for his *opponent's*, just as



the billiardsman, hoping to distract his rival with noisy cue-chalking, must do so not when his opponent is lining up a shot, but while he lines up *one of his own*.

Many useful subsidiary principles derive from the inviolable rule of sportsmanship. You will automatically go one-up by appearing the more courteous contestant, but at the same time your sportsmanlike demeanor will always, as if unintentionally of course, have the further effect of demoralizing your opponent. Accordingly, apprentices should commit to memory the following sub-precepts: EXCEL WITH SELF-DEPRECIATION, UNDERMINE WITH PRAISE, ADVANCE THROUGH DEFERENCE, and HAMPER WITH HELPFULNESS. Allow us to offer some elementary examples for the beginners among our readers.

As for the first sub-precept, suppose an immature skua (I believe you Yanks charmingly persist in calling them jaegers) flashes by your shoreline viewpoint, and some cocky chap calls it a long-tailed. "I never could have identified that one," you must say, "So you caught a glimpse of the undertail coverts?" If your rival, suddenly wary, begins to enumerate other field-marks, continue by saying, "So many of these young birds can be such a muddle, I'm afraid, especially in such a quick look." Just a light touch, but listeners will begin to wonder if your rival may have jumped the gun on this one.

As for undermining with praise, this is the converse of the preceding. "You have so much more experience with those races of white-crowned sparrow," you can say, "We almost never get a chance to practice on the white-lored ones around here." As to whether this lack of practice may be due to ignorance, or alternatively to the absence of the birds in question, you may leave for the audience to decide. Even if she is a genuine expert, what can Rival respond? If she answers, "I must admit I've spent a lot of time out West studying these sparrows," she sounds a trifle self-trumpeting, and if she counters with humility it must inevitably sound a false note.

Advancing through deference has many applications, but one primary ploy is exemplified after a distant bird briefly appears flapping over a marsh. The birdsman will often choose not to jump to conclusions, perhaps by looking thoughtful, then asking, "Well, what do *you* think?" even—or especially—when the ID seems straightforward. The birdsman can then proceed directly to undermining with praise.

Hampering with helpfulness will be familiar to anyone who has felt compelled to rush up flight of stairs by a "helpful" stranger holding open a door for one at the top of the steps, when one notices the stranger's features gradually reveal a struggle to avoid showing impatience with one's slow upward progress. Such a primitive gambit, it is hardly worth mentioning, would never disable an accomplished birdsman, who would counter by cheerfully waving thanks, then dropping to one knee to pretend to tie one or even both shoelaces, leaving the challenger to look foolish. This ploy works best, we must emphasize, when one's shoes actually have laces.

A perennially useful technique involves acting more politely than one's opponent. Any praiseworthy display of birding etiquette can, when guilefully carried slightly to excess, serve the birdsman in jockeying for advantage. Some elementary examples follow.

Birders never disturb birds unduly. Match Rival's bold stride with exaggeratedly cautious stealth. When he advances towards a bird, you must yourself retreat, or at least move off at a tangent, as if seeking a less disruptive vantage point. When Rival speaks, wince almost imperceptibly and as if involuntarily at the volume of his voice, and when you must answer, whisper.

Birders respect the environment. If your rival absentmindedly picks at a bit of bark, wonder aloud if it might be the preferred nesting material for a local warbler. Be seen inconspicuously propping up stems of plants your rival may have trod upon, or replacing clods of earth stirred by her heedless boots. Birders take notes on observations. If your antagonist seizes the initiative here, taking voluminous notes upon finding an unusual bird, take none yourself, saying "Oh, notes are so important...but I like to use every available moment to observe the bird itself." If on the other hand Rival fails to take notes, take many, especially on common species like starlings, saying, "See? Must be a pre-flocking behaviour. Did anyone bring a thermometer? Ought to include the temperature in my report..."

Birders are cautious about jumping to conclusions about identifications. Suppose the birding has become rather slow at the arboretum, and Rival lowers his binoculars, saying, "Just another flock of robins." "Yes, I suppose so," you can say, "Still, I remember one time when Sharon Woods made us go through every individual in a flock like that, and we found a varied thrush."

Some over-eager theorists have grouped these techniques under the rubric of *paralysing by polarising*. Your rival can always be rattled, and onlookers enlisted to your cause, if you skillfully contrast your style with his. If he seems obsessed with finding rarities, make it a point to scrutinize common birds. If his binoculars are costly, proudly wear an old pair of well worn-in East German naval glasses. If your antagonist goes afield in wellingtons, Barbour jacket and matching cap, wear madras Bermuda shorts, a straw boater, and tee shirt with a motorcycle theme. If on the other hand Rival takes the informal approach, by all means act a bit proper and scrupulous without seeming too stiff. It goes without saying that with clothing you must be adaptable. Many clothesmen carry two or three outfits in the boot of the car, changing into the more advantageous outfit as called for. Maintain competition on your own terms. Remember that you can hardly lose if you seem not to be playing a game.

Finally, a matter of style. Birdsmen will have noticed in the foregoing a preference for the rather more traditional British methods. In recent years, a more rough-and-tumble American style is increasingly being seen on this side of the Pond, though it must be said it remains jarringly unacceptable in many settings here. Many veteran birdsmen regard it as heavy-handed, but it has scored some undeniable successes, and its practitioners seem to revel in the risks involved. I was able to study these contrasting approaches recently as I witnessed two birdsmen sparring one September at a Delaware refuge. Brit had announced finding a winter-plumaged little stint, and had asserted the natural one-upness of the British birder in such a situation, treating the sighting with perceptible nonchalance while being elaborately helpful to Yank in pointing out field characters, careful to mention his personal goal of finding a spotted sandpiper before the day was out, etc. All very well done, of course. When the bird had flown, he extracted a notebook and made some inscrutably abbreviated jottings therein.

Brit (mumbling, but allowing himself to be overheard): Nice little problem.

Yank: Eh? What's that?

Brit (half-reluctantly allowing himself to be drawn out): Oh...well, the tertials.

Yank: The tertials? What about them?

Brit: Yes, well...what looked liked notching...I suppose it's just wear, this time of year...But it was a bit of a surprise.

Yank (recognizing where this was leading, and that his little stint could be turning into something much less exciting): Say, I noticed your scope—it's one of those new-fangled crystal-sort of things, isn't it? Not real glass, right?"

Brit (a trifle guarded now): Yes, the fluorite.

Yank: I suppose it does make it easier.

Brit (half-sensing a veiled accusation that he's cheating somehow, but rallying): Yes, well, rather...I must say my wife was not pleased at having to put off getting new furniture for the parlour, but it was worth every one of the extra two hundred pounds. Care to have a peek?

Yank: Oh, that's all right, thanks. A couple of my buddies have them. Touchy, aren't they, though? One guy had to send his back twice before it was re-aligned right. Anyway, I still like the old ones better—there's something warmer and more real about the image, I think.

Brit: More real?

Yank: Yeah, more analogue...more holistic—know what I mean?

Brit: Sorry? Afraid I'm not with you, old chap. Do you mean the colour correction?

Yank: No, it's...more direct somehow, less like a display...

Brit, against his better judgement, eventually grew a bit huffy. Several hallmarks of the more confrontational American style are apparent here, including the abrupt change of topic, and the use, almost diagnostic of this approach, of the boldly inscrutable. Brit's constitutional unwillingness to seem impolite is turned to a disadvantage as Yank runs roughshod over him. Birdsmen must decide which style is to their liking in a given situation, but while it is handy to be skilled in both, it is seldom advisable to mix them. I must add that my countryman rallied in this particular case, withdrawing an ebony case containing watercolours and brushes, then spending twenty minutes on a field sketch. A pity that no other onlookers witnessed this exemplary struggle!

I have, in these brief and inadequate remarks, enlisted many anecdotes and illustrative examples in the cause of clarifying some of the fundamental principles of birdsmanship. Doubtless, the beginner will always profit most from careful observation of the accomplished birdman *in the field*, rather than in the lecture room. No bare elucidation of abstract principles, no reading of the essential texts, will substitute for close study of the supple manoeuvres of skilled practitioners—and I should add that Ohio, based on my regrettably brief experiences there, has several of estimable rank, not the least of them the redoubtable Gordon Parks---at work against a well-matched opponent. Nonetheless, I hope that this rather more systematic treatment of the art's theoretical underpinnings has been of some help, to the uninitiated and the would-be birdsmen alike.

## Recent Actions of the Ohio Bird Records Committee

### Tom Kemp, Secretary

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This report covers the spring 2005 migration period, a couple of new records from 2004, and recirculations from 2003-2004. Twenty-six records were reviewed, including 14 from Spring 2005, with one of these (Red-naped Sapsucker) a new state record. Half of these records were accepted by the committee, three were not accepted, and ten remain in circulation.

### Accepted records

Fulvous whistling-duck *Dendrocygna bicolor*

16 May 2005, Grand Lake St. Marys (Mercer Co.); J. Bowers

Glossy ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

15 May 2005, Ottawa NWR (Lucas & Ottawa Cos.); J. Morlan, m.obs.

White-faced ibis *Plegadis chihi*

15 May 2005, Ottawa NWR (Lucas & Ottawa Cos.); J. Morlan, m.obs.

Yellow rail *Coturnicops noveboracensis*

5-6 May 2005, Irwin Prairie SNP (Lucas Co.); T. Kemp, m.obs.

Piping plover *Charadrius melodus*

30 April 2005, Shawnee SF (Scioto Co.); R. Rogers, m.obs.

Piping plover *Charadrius melodus*

29 April - 4 May 2005, Caesar Creek SP (Warren Co.); L. Gara, m.obs.

Red-naped sapsucker *Sphyrapicus nuchalis*

4-8 April 2005, Holmes Co.; many observers

Bohemian waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

6 March 2004, Cuyahoga Valley NP; J. Brumfeld

Black-throated gray warbler *Dendroica nigrescens*

9 May 2005, Kelleys Island (Erie Co.); T. Krynak, S. & L. Roberts

Kirtland's warbler *Dendroica kirtlandii*

16 May 2005, Metzger Marsh (Lucas Co.); J. & A. Edwards

Kirtland's warbler *Dendroica kirtlandii*

25 May 2005, Magee Marsh (Lucas Co.); A. Boone, m.obs.

Swainson's warbler *Limnithlypis swainsonii*

21 May 2005, Mohican SF (Ashland Co.); S. Snyder, G. Cowell, T. & T.

Leslie

**Records not accepted**

Ross's goose *Chen rossii* 30 November 2003, Hamilton Co.

The distance to this bird was apparently very great and the observer himself was unsure of the identification. For these reasons, the committee voted not to accept this record.

Arctic tern *Sterna paradisaea* 18 August 2004, Erie Co.

The committee felt that several important identification points were excluded from the documentation. These included no details of translucent primaries, an important feature of Arctic tern; overall more details on wing coloration, especially when compared to common and Forster's terns, were desirable. The body shape, typically plumper in Arctic tern, was not mentioned. Although this was a well-written documentation, the lack of the above details did not allow the committee to accept as Arctic tern.

Rufous hummingbird *Selasphorus rufus* 31 October - 21 November, Lorain Co.

Although the committee felt that this bird was probably a rufous, individual feathers are difficult to see except in the hand, and although degree of probability suggests rufous is more likely than Allen's, there is not enough to confirm the identification as a rufous.

**Recirculated records**

Brown pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis* 19 September 2003

Glossy ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* 25 October 2004, Medusa Marsh

Tricolored heron *Egretta tricolor* 21 May 2005, Ottawa NWR

Mississippi kite *Ictinia mississippiensis* 1 May 2005, Shawnee SF

Swainson's hawk *Buteo swainsoni* 20 November 2003, Lake Co.

Gyr Falcon *Falco rusticolus* 25 January 2005, The Wilds

Yellow rail *Coturnicops noveboracensis* 15 September 2004, Hamilton Co.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* 18 July 2003, Wyandot Co.

Curlew sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* 6 September 2003, Wayne Co.

White-winged dove *Zenaidura macroura* 16-19 August 2004, Portage Co.

## Length of Migration Stopover of the Buff-breasted Sandpiper in Ohio

by **Brian Zwiebel**

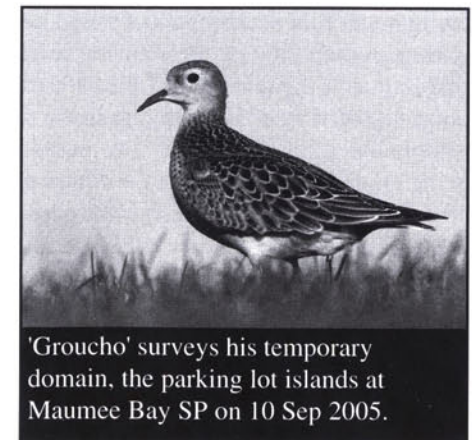
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On 27 August 2005 I was fortunate enough to attend a shorebird symposium presented by the Ohio Ornithological Society, Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, and the Toledo Naturalists' Association, at Maumee Bay State Park in Lucas County, Ohio. The keynote speaker, Robert Russell, gave a presentation on "Mysteries of Great Lakes Shorebirds." Russell, a wetlands biologist, is currently the Midwest Shorebird Coordinator in the USFWS's Region 3. In his talk, he mentioned that buff-breasted sandpipers *Tryngites subruficollis* are thought to have short migrational stopovers, generally ranging from several hours to two or three days. According to Russell, this estimate is based upon incidental notes of observations in Minnesota. He further states that he knows of no formal stopover studies for buff-breasted sandpipers.

The US Shorebird Conservation Plan (2001), the full text of which is available at <http://www.fws.gov/shorebirdplan/USShorebird/downloads/USShorebirdPlan2Ed.pdf>, reports on p. 55 the estimated population of this species at 15,000 birds. The 2005 update of the USSCP increases that estimate to 20,000, based in part upon the belief that the species has very short migration stopovers, and hence that observations of birds at a given site represent cohorts of migrants passing through in quicker successions than many other shorebird species.

Based on my own observations and those of several other observers during a three-week period at Maumee Bay State Park (MBSP) I hope to demonstrate that the stopover duration for buff-breasted sandpipers as currently understood should be re-evaluated, and that consequently their population may be overestimated in the latest edition of the USSCP. The USSCP states the confidence level of the population estimates for this species to be "low," because data are obtained from broad-scale surveys and estimates. If our



'Groucho' surveys his temporary domain, the parking lot islands at Maumee Bay SP on 10 Sep 2005.

study's results are typical, the numbers may be further flawed based on the thinking that new birds are being counted in surveys taken every two to three days at migrant shorebird survey sites; thus, it is possible that surveyors may be significantly overestimating the total North American population of this species, with consequent underestimations of its conservation needs.

On 28 August, the day after the symposium, I followed up on a report of a single buff-breasted sandpiper at MBSP on the 27th. Upon arriving on the site in the afternoon I observed two birds of this species feeding on moths on a narrow strip of lawn between the parking lot and the beach at the Park. It soon became apparent that one of the birds had a noticeably deformed bill, with an apparent "Roman-nose" appearance, with a drooping tip. This easily recognizable individual was soon affectionately dubbed



One of Groucho's companions at Maumee Bay SP on the way to South America. Photo taken 10 Sep 2005 by Brian Zwiebel.

"Groucho." Groucho remained on the site until at least 15 September, a stopover duration of 19 days, more than six times the reported average length of stay for the species! This prolonged stay also occurred in marginal habitat, 20-foot wide mowed grassy strips separating sections of a large parking lot extensively used by beach visitors at a busy state park in the height of the tourist season. Observers often remarked upon the "tame" character of these birds, not atypical of juvenal birds arriving from remote Arctic breeding grounds who may be encountering human activities for the first time.

Several people have suggested that this individual remained longer at this stopover spot because its deformed bill may have been less effective in capturing insect prey to restore its fat reserves for migration. Since the preferred food source of the several buff-breasted sandpipers present seemed to be live moths captured by active foraging in the short grass, a deformity could perhaps result in less efficient feeding. The moths were often observed escaping capture by the sandpipers present, but the comparative success rates of normal birds vs. Groucho is not known. Groucho was observed eating numerous moths from the lawn, however, and while its bill shape did not seem to be having an obvious effect, it is possible it could have been a factor in feeding efficiency. One might expect a reduced feeding efficiency sufficient to result in a six-fold longer stay than expected would have been apparent to observers, however.

One bird with a bill deformity may not be the best measuring-stick for the stopover duration of any species during migration. Other birds present during the study period should be considered. Of most interest were three other buff-breasted sandpipers in the company of Groucho, present from 2-15

September (except for 9, 12, and 13 September, for which there are no known data). Four buff-breasted sandpipers (Groucho and three others) were present on 11 of 14 days where reliable reports are available. I hypothesize that the stable number of four birds present between 2 and 15 September were actually the same birds each day, and did not represent turnovers of other migrants, which coincidentally totaled four birds each day.

Another point that should be considered is the weather pattern for the 14-day period in question. This period had a relatively mild stretch of weather, with mostly light northerly winds up to 11 mph, and no measurable precipitation. Temperatures were mild, with highs in the mid-60s to mid-70s, and lows in the mid-60s F. There were no strong northerly winds that would have encouraged a southward departure, and no southerly winds that would have unduly deferred it <http://wunderground.com/weatherstation/WXDailyHistory.asp?ID=KOHTOLED4>.

These data suggest that current estimates of the duration of stays at stopover sites of this species may need re-evaluation, especially in light of that fact that new findings may have an impact on estimations of their overall population status. Indeed it is likely that the USSCP estimation of the Buff-breasted sandpiper population may be optimistic at best.

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## Black-billed Magpies in our Back Yard

by **Bob Lane**

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Extraordinary bird sightings are totally unexpected in Damascus. A small Ohio town, split down the middle by the Mahoning-Columbiana county line, Damascus is heavily wooded, with many large trees, including many pines and spruces. Scenic farmland and open country dotted with tracts of woodland surround it. Pleasant it is to be sure, but not a scene for rare birds.

The saga of the magpies began on the morning of Sunday, 28 August 2005, on the Mahoning County side of town. My wife Denise was working in the yard, and heard sounds with which she was familiar, but not in Ohio. Excited, she came back to the house and told me I was going to think she was crazy, but that she heard magpies out back. I followed her outside, and soon I too heard them, out along the tree line. It was not long before they flew into view, landing above us in a tree.

Like a dream for two avid birders, we had two black-billed magpies *Pica hudsonia* appear in our back yard. Entranced, we watched them for about an hour as they moved around in the treetops between our yard and a lake nearby. At length, a red-shouldered hawk showed up, and apparently disturbed them. The magpies were gone, over the trees, and we couldn't relocate them. We decided to announce the sighting, hoping that extra eyes and ears would help us relocate the birds. During the late afternoon, twelve knowledgeable birders, all from Ohio or Pennsylvania, showed up.

Hours of intensive searching failed to find the magpies. The only confirmation that Denise and I hadn't been seeing things was a story of an encounter one Pennsylvania birder had with some local kids. He'd asked them if they'd seen any unusual birds, and they'd responded that yes, two black-and-white parrots had just flown by about fifteen minutes earlier. As he pointed out, coming from Ohio non-birders this is as good a description of magpies as you can expect!

What a day! What mood swings! In the morning we felt like we were in some sort of birding Super Bowl, then by evening, after none of us could find the birds, we thought we'd missed the game entirely.

Two days later, on Tuesday, we witnessed the birds making another quick morning pass, and then they were gone again. How strange it was that such vocal and visually striking birds can vanish so quickly! Five days later, on Sunday 4 September, while I took an 8 am walk in the yard, I heard the magpies out toward the west. They were back. After just a few minutes of searching, I located them in a tree on the edge of the pasture. This was the first good view I'd had of the two birds perched side by side: one was noticeably smaller, with a smaller tail. Neither had a leg band, and their feathers were pristine and full.

Were they a pair, or an adult with a juvenile? We could not be sure, but in the account that follows we'll call them male and female. With looks this good, my next thought was to get photographs for verification.

I hurried to get Denise, as well as the owner of the pasture, a non-birding neighbor. When we returned, the birds were nowhere to be seen. Not again! After half an hour of listening and scanning, Denise heard a magpie to the north, and eventually we refound a single bird, the longer-tailed male. Here was the first sign of the reclusive nature of the female. Over the next two hours Denise and our neighbor tracked the bird on foot, while I fetched a camera and made phone calls. The male made nine tree-top stops over a half-mile area on the west side of town, and when I finally caught up with the pursuers I got photos of him in the crown of a dead tree.

Finally, visual proof! After twenty minutes of offering great views, the bird flew over the local fire station and out of sight. We walked to the other side of the station, and lo and behold, bird number two was back with number one, after two hours of being unseen together. After one more treetop stop, they were off, and gone for the day. Interestingly, of eleven stops we observed, nine were at the very tips of very tall spruce trees.

On the following day we were especially alert, and had a quick sighting of both birds in the morning, and later in the evening a sighting of the male on a silo half a mile to the west. The latter was the only time we saw either after noon in Mahoning County.

On Tuesday morning 6 September, the tenth day after our initial sighting, a member of the Records Committee was with Denise and both got good views of both birds for about an hour. Finally, an experienced birder, not just one of the neighbors, could verify the presence of magpies.

This was to be the last sighting for another ten days. It also closes the Mahoning County chapter of the story. On every occasion during this period, we heard the birds before we saw them. They were never seen on the ground, only in trees. We never witnessed them feeding; and they were always on the move, making photos hard to come by.

We felt the birds had probably moved on, but we didn't give up hope. During the next week I visited farms, golf courses, and local householders within a three-mile radius of Damascus, showing pictures of magpies and asking if anyone had seen or heard of anyone else seeing the birds. No one responded positively. I left my phone number. One thing I did find out was that even a bird as stunning as a magpie can go unnoticed by most people. To them it's just an odd-looking crow, and even if they had recognized what they saw, whom would they tell about it? And what of smaller, quieter, less striking species---how many of them must pass through Ohio undetected?

On the evening of 16 September I received three phone calls within a twenty-minute span. My efforts had paid off. A lady who lived nearby, an animal control officer, and the owner of the Westville Golf Course had seen the birds, all in the same area in Columbiana County, two miles southwest of our location.

We immediately went out to look, and soon found the birds. Where had the magpies gone between the brief and occasional visits witnessed earlier? Denise was home all day, every day. She knows magpies well, and if they'd been around she would have detected them.

Thus began the Columbiana County chapter of the story. During the next nine days, even though the birds could be found with dedicated searching, there were no distinct patterns to follow. They were often on private property, out of sight from roads, etc. The property owners did not want visitors other than Denise and I or other local people. We followed their movements every day as best we could.

On several occasions I received calls from local observers who were concerned the male magpie had been injured. They had seen this bird hopping along, and had not realized this was his normal gait. One book describes this species as noisy, shy, and aggressive at times. When the magpies were vocal we never tired of listening to their continuous chattering; it was music to our ears. They did seem shy, and never tame, always avoiding coming close to human visitors. They never begged for handouts. As for occasional aggressiveness, a cat was once observed climbing into one of their roosts, and when it got close the male literally knocked it out of the tree. On numerous occasions, both magpies were seen tormenting local cats.

The magpies did not always roost close together at night, but usually within a few hundred feet of one another—within calling range. Except for some scoldings from blue jays, we noticed no antagonistic interactions between the magpies and local birds.

On Monday, 26 September, views from the public road were possible, both in the early morning and the late afternoon. The female continued to be very hard to come by, and preferred to roost in a nearly inaccessible area around some dilapidated farm sheds, overgrown with vegetation, behind a house with many barking dogs. Fortunately, the lady who'd called ten days earlier finally agreed, reluctantly, to let us bring individuals to her back yard to look for the birds.

I called the twenty-one people who'd made the trek to Mahoning County but had failed to see the magpies, telling them they now had a good opportunity to do so. During the early part of the week, most of these people came with us and observed the birds, most often at a huge compost pile behind the local lady's house. The magpies could be found rooting around in the pile, and I now wonder if they were possibly after earthworms in the decaying material. By Wednesday a large grassy field just to the north, loaded with grasshoppers, became a reliable and accessible viewing area, hosting many visits from the birds. This location, between a picturesque farmstead and some leaky gas storage tanks, was to host many human visitors as well.

Denise and I were able to obtain limited permission for access from the farm owners to let observers come. Now believing chances of seeing the magpies were very good, we decided it was time to let other birders know. We called and had directions to the site posted on the ohio-birds internet list,

including restrictions requested by residents neighboring the site. During the next eight days over 120 magpie-seekers from Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Ontario came and had good looks at the birds. Most came in small groups, but twenty-two Amish visitors from Holmes and Wayne Counties came in larger ones. There was a carnival atmosphere when numerous visitors arrived, and few if any left disappointed.

A nature columnist for the *Columbus Dispatch* came to visit on Friday evening, sitting with five other birders in the middle of the field for three hours until dark fell. They enjoyed magpie activity all around and overhead, with colorful rolling farmland as background, taking away lasting memories shared with newfound friends. He was to have a four-hour drive home in the dark to savor them. Many others gladly paid a price in time and miles for the magpies, and others shared them vicariously through a wonderful article the columnist was to write about his visit.

Would-be magpie watchers sometimes had to wait as long as an hour and a half, but patience paid off with views of grasshopper foraging, breathtaking flyovers, and memorable vocalizations. On two occasions observers grew impatient, and played a magpie recording, whereupon the male popped into view in a nearby tree. Even this more demonstrative bird could blend into the shadows of the leaves, where his dramatic black and white coloration served as a camouflage. By contrast, a magpie seen flying across the open grassy field was striking, its long bluish-green tail streaming gracefully, seemingly in slow motion as everyone watched in silent appreciation.

We kept a magpie log, where all visitors signed in; many returned more than once, some up to four times. Many saw only the male, though the female could often be heard calling from the trees. On one occasion two groups of birders were about 500 feet apart at opposite ends of the field. At exactly the same moment, one group spotted the male perched briefly atop the silo next to the barn, while the other was glimpsed along the tree line to the south. Members of both groups were frantically signaling one another, and we all had a laugh when we discovered both birds were involved.

Among many interesting behaviors was one noted as the male walked along the right edge of the paved road, plucking grasshoppers from the grassy berm, then snapping his head to the left, bouncing them off the pavement before eating them. Perhaps this served to stun them and ensure they couldn't escape. On two occasions while going to check on the female at her roost, I heard what I believed to be her, only to find a blue jay doing a perfect imitation of a magpie call. Claiming a find by sound alone is not necessarily a certainty, especially when a mimicking corvid is involved. Once the male, while foraging around the area of the barn, was seen pulling insulation from electrical wiring. On another occasion he was observed catching what appeared to be wasps under the eaves of the barn.

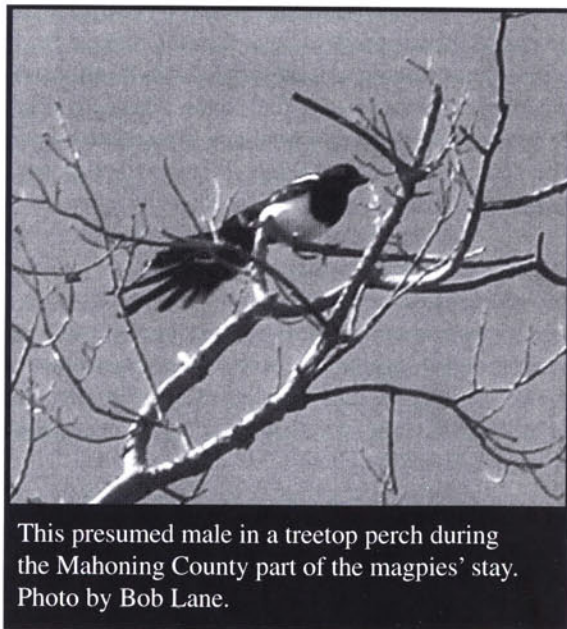
The magpie's presence in the Damascus area was acknowledged by over twenty-five internet postings. We found Mike Busam's write-up the most entertaining, using the characters Heckle and Jeckle, the mischievous cartoon

magpies, to make light of some of the issues encountered when out-of-town birders come to visit a rural area with many private landowners. Here's an excerpt:

*Bob and Denise Lane have helped scores of birders navigate the local social mores in order to catch a glimpse of the birds. Birders interested in taking a shot at seeing the magpies would do well to catch up on the do's and don'ts of magpie watching before traveling the road to Damascus: don't even think about talking to the neighbors; watch where you park, for there are No Trespassing areas and natural gas leaks; and beware of angry dogs, as well. All in all, sounds like a lot of fun! But all of this is in keeping with the Damascus magpies' namesakes. One can imagine the cartoon magpies and what they would make of the fuss, perhaps Heckle peddling a "Bad Humor" ice-cream cart, bell a-jangling, down the road, advertising his wares to birders and residents alike, and Jeckle puffing on a stogie next to the "Caution" tape alongside the gas leak, a cruel grin on his face.*

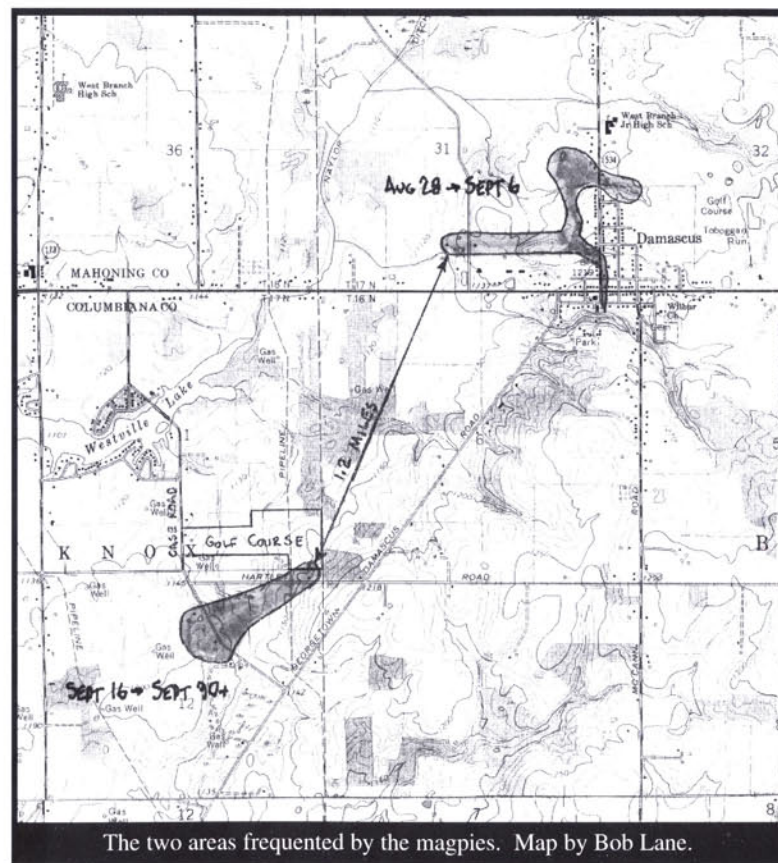
The daily habits and movements of the magpies while at the Columbiana County site were completely different from those while at the Mahoning County location. At times one wondered, indeed, if these might really be a second pair of magpies. Very seldom did we witness any type of repetitive daily routine. The only hint of a reliably observable pattern was at the pond adjacent to the field. The male was observed on five nights at about 6:30 pm—though never on consecutive nights—walking or hopping the perimeter of the pond at the water's edge.

The last sighting was of both birds near the gas storage tanks on the morning of 14 October. During the week before their apparent departure they were being seen together, feeding early in the morning; they were both hard to find during the rest of the day. Previous to this, seeing them together at the site was unusual. By the 14<sup>th</sup>, it seemed the grasshoppers and crickets at the field were nearly gone. Perhaps this was an invitation to move on.



This presumed male in a treetop perch during the Mahoning County part of the magpies' stay. Photo by Bob Lane.

It has been an interesting chapter in our lives. It was lucky for us that they stayed in our area for forty-seven days, and we totally enjoyed playing magpie hide-and-seek. Finding and observing them gave us an unusual purpose every day. We felt a sense of emptiness when they'd left: what then were we going to do today instead with our spare time? We were fortunate also to make personal contact with most of the birders who came to visit. All of those we met, sometimes with our assistance, succeeded in seeing a magpie, and some to see them both. One of the most rewarding aspects of having these birds so close to home was the opportunity to put faces to the names of birding enthusiasts we have seen mentioned in publications for the past twenty-five years. As diehard birders, this was our once-in-a-lifetime spot in the limelight, right in our back yard, our moment of birding glory! To any reader who was a magpie watcher, thank you for coming to visit our little corner of Ohio. It has been fun. And good luck to the magpies, wherever they may be.



The two areas frequented by the magpies. Map by Bob Lane.

## Short Note: Shorebird Migration at a Temporary Scrape

by William Hull

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During the late spring, summer, and early autumn of 2005 I tried to monitor migrating shorebirds using a temporary scrape that had filled with water at the earthworks at Armleder Park in Cincinnati.

Located about five miles east of downtown Cincinnati along Wooster Road to the northeast of the Beechmont levy, Armleder Park is one of the newest properties in the Hamilton County Park system. Bounded by the Little Miami River on one side, the 323 acres of this park are entirely within the floodplain of the river. I was first made aware of the potential of this property a few years ago when Stan Hedeem posted messages to the Cincinnati Birds web site regarding ducks in the flooded fields on the plain. I later met him one afternoon at an overlook at Ault Park and scoped ducks feeding in the fields of what would eventually become Armleder Park. After returning from a trip in the spring of 2005, I once again saw messages from Stan referring to this property. However, this time they referred to shorebirds, and the property now had public access. This definitely piqued my curiosity: shorebirds a few miles from downtown and just off my daily commute! Starting in mid-May I tried to stop by the park on my way to and from work to do a count of shorebirds. Some weekend visits were also made.

In recent times this property had been a soybean field. It is now a Hamilton County Park, although some areas are being jointly managed with Cincinnati Park Board and the Cincinnati Recreation Commission. Currently the park is under active construction. The result of this will be a mixed-use facility, with walking and biking trails, soccer fields, a multi-purpose field, a playground, and some buildings. A large portion of the park will be left a "naturalized" area, to be planted in native floodplain vegetation. Extensive earthwork is being conducted to install a drainage system and prepare the ground for the native plantings. Initially a scrape was made to facilitate drainage during the construction phase. I learned by talking to one of the main contractors on the site that this was not to be a permanent feature. Apparently there were fears that the standing water would attract waterfowl and interfere with flight patterns at nearby Lunken Airport. In my opinion the seven soccer fields pose more of a threat, as an attractant of resident Canada geese. This proved to be the case, based upon observations subsequent to the growth of the grasses planted for the fields. The scrape seemed to be the major attractant for migrating shorebirds. Occasionally they would flush from the area, such as when a plane flew over, but would often return a few minutes later.

The period of observation lasted from 17 May through 11 Oct, the day the scrape was filled. During this period I made a total of 92 visits and observed 93 migratory shorebirds of six species. Killdeers were not counted as migratory, although some may have been, as they were actively breeding at the site. There were no birds seen between 9 June and 19 July, so I am assuming that birds seen before 9 June were northbound and those after 19 July were

Hull

southbound. Of the 93 birds seen, 58 were present during the northbound period and 35 during the southbound. The highest count for any single visit was ten birds. Table 1 shows the species seen along with the maximum seen during a visit, the total seen during the northbound and southbound periods and the total seen during the entire period of observation.

Species	Maximum Visit Count	Total During Northbound Period	Total During Southbound Period	Total During Entire Period of Observation
Semipalmated plover	3	3	0	3
Spotted sandpiper	3	8	2	10
Solitary sandpiper	1	1	9	10
Least sandpiper	7	24	23	47
Semipalmated sandpiper	7	22	0	22
Baird's sandpiper	1	0	1	1

Table 1

I am certain if I had been able to visit more frequently my count would have been higher and the diversity most likely would have been greater. This park property has a lot of potential beyond the temporary scrape that I have documented above. Stan Hedeem, for example, had reported seeing pectoral sandpiper, lesser yellowlegs, and Wilson's snipe on 5 May. Beyond shorebirds, I have also observed many other interesting species during my visits. These include but are not limited to the following: peregrine falcon, horned lark, American pipit, grasshopper sparrow, Nelson's sharp-tailed sparrow, savannah sparrow, blue grosbeak, dickcissel, eastern meadowlark, and bobolink. The contractor with whom I talked on numerous visits also described birds that best matched great and cattle egrets and ospreys. The interesting finds extend beyond the avian world. I have seen up to five bronze copper butterflies during a visit; both male and females were observed, indicating there may be a local breeding colony. In early August I photographed an aquatic plant that had grown up in the scrape. I recently learned from Jim McCormac's account of the shorebird symposium on the Ohio Ornithological Society's website that this plant is southern wapato *Sagittaria calycina*, which he describes as being quite rare in Ohio.

Although the total number of birds may not be high compared to some of Ohio's shorebird hotspots, the brief study shows the potential for such a site only a few miles from a major downtown area. It certainly provided me with the opportunity to observe a number of individual shorebirds in various plumage states, often at very close range. I have photographed many of the species, shorebirds and others, that I have seen in the park. These may be viewed on my website. If you are interested please visit <http://www.mangoverde.com/wbg/> and enter "Armleder" in the search box. This will return a list of species of which there are photos taken in the park. The scrape may be gone but I have continued to visit the park and it looks like it may have shorebird potential again next year. Although a drainage system has been put in, there are still many areas that are collecting shallow pools of water.



## A Green Violet-ear in Holmes County

by **Gabe Hostetler**

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The phone rang shortly after 1 o'clock on the afternoon of August 16, 2005, interrupting a business conversation I was having with my two brothers. I took the call.

"Hartville Cabinet & Design. This is Gabe."

"Hi, Gabe. This is Jake Wengerd."

I winced. I knew this call was going to be about birds "Hey, Jake. What's up?" I responded cheerfully, knowing that my non-birding brothers would be rolling their eyes by now.

"Well, we need someone to help us identify a bird. A guy I work with says he has a strange kind of hummingbird coming to his feeder. His wife noticed it first yesterday. They have lots of ruby-throats and they're sure this is something different."

"What's it look like?" I asked, fully expecting to hear about a little orange bird, and fully prepared to tell Jake he was describing a rufous hummingbird, a bird rare but now annual in Ohio.

"Well, he says it's a really big hummingbird. And it's mostly blue and green. It looks green from the back and blue when it faces front." I was not prepared to hear that.

"Wow. That almost sounds like a green violet-ear," I said, surprised at how I had so casually rolled off the name of a potential first state record.

"A what?"

"A green violet-ear. It's a Central American species that can show up almost anywhere in North America." Reluctant to stir up too much excitement, I added, "I doubt very much this bird is really a violet-ear, but it certainly sounds interesting anyway."

"A few of us are going to go over to see it after work. I thought maybe if you could come over, too, to tell us what it is we're looking at . . ."

"I'd love to," I interrupted eagerly, "I'm sure you don't need my help anyway, but I'll get there as soon as I can."

After receiving directions to the bird's location, the Allen Miller residence near Holmesville in Holmes County, and thanking Jake for calling, I hung up the phone. I'd have to wait till work was done, but more than likely a novice backyard birdwatcher had seen an overstuffed ruby-throat, and with a little imagination had turned it into something exotic.

I turned my attention back to my work and tried to forget about the hummingbird. I didn't succeed entirely. During the more than hour-long drive home I received a call on my cell phone. It was Jake.

"Hey, some of us are at Allen's place and we've just seen the hummingbird." He paused for dramatic effect before continuing. "And it definitely is a green violet-ear."

"I'll be there as soon as I can," I said, pushing hard on the accelerator before our brief conversation ended. I discovered that the distance from home that I had previously thought to be a ten-minute drive could in special circumstances be covered in less than six.

I lurched into the driveway, barged into the house, dashed up the stairs, and greeted my startled wife with a breathless "I gotta go. There's a rare bird a few miles from here that I have to go see. I just stopped in to grab my binocs and the camera." My wife, who thinks she is married to the rarest bird of all, calmly retrieved the camera while I collared my binoculars, and I shot back out the door.

Every mile seemed to stretch forever, and I thought I would never reach my destination, except that the directions had been so precise as to leave no room for doubt. When I finally parked in the driveway next to the barn as I had been instructed, I immediately saw half a dozen or so Amish men huddled some distance from the house. I stepped out of the van and held out my hands palms up. One of them nodded and gave the thumbs-up. I thought that meant the bird was in view right then. I scurried across the yard. "Is the bird still here?" I asked, meaning *is it visible to you right now?* "Yes," one of them said. I felt a surge of anticipation. "It was just here a couple of minutes ago. It'll probably be back again soon." *Oh.*

I took time to survey the landscape. The ground sloped gradually upward, at least a hundred feet of neat lawn separating us and the house, where a hummingbird feeder hung next to a window. A woodlot abutted the back of the property. Jake told me the violet-ear's habit was to venture from the woods to visit the feeder before disappearing back into the trees. Nodding, I raised my binoculars to study a ruby-throat at the feeder. I was not impressed with the view. I eyed the high-end spotting scopes aimed at the feeder and hoped someone would offer me a look when the violet-ear came around again. Holding the camera against the eyepiece of a scope offered the only hope of getting even a marginally decent photo. Even so, I appreciated that the observers were keeping a safe distance and talking quietly, doing their best not to spook the bird. *If only I could be permitted to watch from the house*, I thought to myself. I didn't hold out much hope for that, though, especially when I learned that the homeowners had very recently become parents for the first time.

Soon a young man strode across the yard, whose identity I learned was Allen Miller, the homeowner. I introduced myself. Mr. Miller took one look at me and my camera and asked if I would like to go inside. "If that would be all right with you," I said. I don't think I have ever needed less time to think over a reply to a question.

Allen led me into the living room area of the house before excusing himself to complete his evening chores. I knelt in front of a sofa less than ten feet from the feeder, separated from it only by a pane of glass so clean it may as well have been made of air. Balancing on the balls of my feet, peering over the camera held slightly below eye level and clutched firmly with both hands, I stared at the feeder. While maintaining this position I managed to have an off-and-on conversation with Mrs. Miller, who stood somewhere behind me, without once taking a chance to glance in her direction.

Mrs. Miller told me that she had noticed the hummingbird for the first time around noon of the previous day. It struck her as so unusual that she had called

her husband at work to tell him about it. He had apparently found her description too outlandish to be true, until he had seen the hummingbird for himself that evening. He knew his co-worker Jake Wengerd had an interest in birds, and fortunately Jake's small circle of birding friends included me. That was how I had come to my present position, squatting in front of a sofa, staring at nothing but the constant comings and goings of ordinary ruby-throated hummingbirds. As the minutes passed I slumped to my knees and brought the camera down into my lap. I wondered if perhaps the guys in the yard were keeping the bird from returning to the feeder. Perhaps I was about to record one of the most spectacular near-misses of my birding career.

When Allen returned from his chores he brought with him a video camera. He had attempted to take some video of the bird, but it had turned out badly. I was welcome to take a look if I wanted, however. Thinking that this might be my only opportunity to see anything of the bird, I said I would be glad to. Allen knelt beside me to show me the footage, and just as I took my eyes off the feeder to view the monitor, I heard Mrs. Miller say, "There it is!"

I looked up to see a large hummingbird masquerading as a miniature peacock, its iridescent blue-and-green plumage shimmering in the evening sunlight as it hovered at the feeder. I froze, completely entranced, trying to absorb as many details as quickly as I could. Gracefully decurved long black bill . . . light blue fan-shaped tail with a darker band running through it . . . buffy underparts . . .

"You'd better hurry up or you're going to miss it," whispered Mr. Miller intently, breaking through my reverie and reminding me of my primary mission. I had not been invited inside the house just so I could attain a killer look for myself. I fumbled with the camera, and by the time I got the feeder in focus, the hummer was gone.

"I'm sorry," I mumbled.

"Don't worry. It'll be back soon," Allen prophesied. This time I would be ready. I propped the camera on the back of the sofa to use as a makeshift tripod, put the feeder in focus and waited. It didn't take long. This time the violet-ear perched at the feeder and I reeled off a half dozen shots without taking a breath.

When the bird flew, I stood up. My right leg was shaking. "Did you get some good pictures?" asked Allen. I said that I thought I had, even though I couldn't claim much for variety. Taking six quick photos of a mostly motionless bird will produce six pictures that look almost identical, I discovered. I didn't care. I had seen the violet-ear and I had photographed it. Let photographers better than I get the artistic poses.

That prompted my next question of the Millers: "This is a remarkable bird, a first state record. If I announce this find to the birding community and you give permission, birders from all over the state will want to come, some as early as tomorrow morning. Would that be all right with you?"

This was something they hadn't considered. They hesitated, imagining hordes of strangers descending upon their yard. "I don't know . . ." one of them faltered. "What would you do?"

My dream is to someday discover a bird on my property that birders from all over the state will want to come see. To reassure them, I said, "In your case, it probably won't be for long, maybe only a few days." Sensing their disappointment at this news, I added, "Or maybe a few weeks if you're lucky.

Green violet-ears usually don't stick around for long." This information I had committed to memory to aid me in resisting the temptation to chase after this species when it had been reported in other states. I could hardly believe I had just observed this species only ten miles from my home. As a clincher, I added that I knew birders to be among the most decently-behaved people I had ever encountered. That was good enough for the Millers.

Before I left the house, the green violet-ear performed an encore. As it hovered at the feeder for a lengthy period, I drank in the sight of it through my binoculars. The purple patch at the side of the head for which the bird is named stood out prominently. I noted that it wasn't an isolated patch of color at all, but continued around the nape and onto the breast, giving the bird the appearance of wearing a stethoscope. The spectacular close-up view of this stunning rarity prompted my right leg to shake more violently than ever.

I went home and posted the discovery of this extraordinary bird to the Ohio birding list, confident that by the next day many others would share my excitement first-hand. But, alas, the green violet-ear was never seen again on the Millers' property. More than a hundred hopeful birders signed up on a register the Millers put out. I have since heard an interesting third-hand account that a family several miles from the Millers were said to have seen a strange hummingbird in their garden for a few days some time in the latter part of August. Did the violet-ear choose on the morning of 17 August to take up residence in a different neighborhood down the road, rather than skeddaddling off to some distant part of the world? We likely will never know for sure.

What we do know is that the green violet-ear *Colibri thalassinus* is an exceptional find anywhere in the Lower 48. Since the first ABA-area report of it at Texas's Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge in 1961, it has been recorded more than fifty times, most often in Texas. But reports continue to multiply, and since 1990 the species has been recorded in Alabama, Alberta, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Ontario, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Now add to that Ohio, pending acceptance by the Ohio Bird Records Committee, making it the 24<sup>th</sup> North American state/province with a green-violet ear record.



Artwork by Donald Sutherland.

## First Documented Cave Swallow for Ohio

by **John Pogacnik**

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**M**y memories of the 5 November 2005 Kirtland Bird Club field trip begin with somebody asking me what I was hoping we'd see that day. "Cave swallow," I answered without hesitation. "Cave swallow...." he asked, puzzled, "Don't you mean cliff swallow? Cave swallows are native to Texas. Why would one be up here?" I reminded him that cave swallows have recently been seen annually along the east coast and in the Great Lakes region in the fall. I pointed out that only the day before over 100 had been seen at Hamlin Beach near Rochester, New York.

This was not the first fall season I had searched for *Petrochelidon fulva* in Ohio. Two years earlier, on the morning of 23 November 2003, I saw what I was sure was a cave swallow from my yard in Lake County as it passed along the lakeshore. I had pretty decent, but brief, views of it in my spotting scope as it flew east. The following day several were reported along Lake Ontario. I mentioned my sighting in passing, but because it was a single-observer sighting and the bird it was pretty far out, I felt uncomfortable about writing it up.

A couple of years before that I had observed distant swallows at Pymatuning Reservoir in Ashtabula County in November. It was raining, and the birds appeared dark, with no color apparent. I was unable to get any closer, and when I returned to my original observation point they were gone. Cave swallows were found not far away just inside Pennsylvania around that same time. I felt frustrated, as Ohio and Indiana were the only states in the region without records of the species, yet I had twice seen birds that could easily have been cave swallows. I was almost reluctant to watch the lake for fear I would see another that I couldn't count. The 5 November KBC field trip seemed promising, though, like one of those times when everything comes together. With over 100 cave swallows seen to the east the day before, we had numerous observers to help verify any possible sighting.

I arrived a little after 7:20 am for the scheduled 8:00 am field trip. Only ten minutes or so after arriving, a swallow passed by at eye-level, heading west. I saw only the tail end of the bird, and it was a little too dark to make out any coloration. Still, this was a most positive omen. In my years of watching the lake from Lake County, I have found very few swallows after early October. Along the western basin, swallows seem to linger later into the season, but along the lake here in the central basin any swallow after early October is extremely noteworthy. I knew any unidentified swallow could possibly be a cave swallow, and I hoped this single bird would be the first of many.

Once we assembled for the field trip I told the thirty-plus participants that cave swallow was a distinct possibility, and described what field marks to

look for on any swallow we might see. I had even printed a copy of Julian Hough's excellent "Cave Swallow vs. Cliff Swallow" ID comparison plate (<http://www.ctbirding.org/images/Cliff3.jpg>) to pass around. Knowing what to look for, all we needed now were swallows. It didn't take long before a group of twelve passed by, heading west. They were out pretty far, but I was able to get them in view in my scope. I thought I could see pale upper rumps, but I was again looking from behind the birds. Nobody else was able to get a good look at them either. About a half hour later a single bird approached. This time, I was clearly able to see the pale rump, very pale throat, and dark cap. I yelled for everybody to get on the bird because this one was surely a cave swallow. The bird cooperated by flying right over us, allowing for some decent views. Ohio finally had its first cave swallow. Two more birds passed by a little later, but again we were looking at the tail end of a bird flying away from us. We had seen a total of sixteen swallows and had identified only one as a cave swallow, though that species could not be ruled out for any of the others seen that morning. We later headed east into Ashtabula County, but saw no other swallows that day.

The following day, 6 November, I again started birding at Perry Park around 7:30. This spot is an excellent vantage point for watching Lake Erie, since there are no trees obstructing the view. By 7:45 I had a group of 30-40 cave swallows heading west. I knew Larry Rosche was in the Mentor Headlands area, so I called him on the phone and we decided to meet at Painesville Township Park, just east of Fairport Harbor. After about 20 minutes of lake watching, Vernon Weingart announced that some swallows were heading west out over the lake. Rosche and I were able to see clearly a group of at least 25 cave swallows. From there we headed to Fairport Harbor. I positioned myself at the marina where the mew gull had been found a few years back, while Rosche and others stood at the east end of Lake Metroparks' Fairport Harbor Lakefront Park. There we saw several swallows in small groups. I would see the swallows first, then advise the others by phone the birds were headed their way, whereupon they would get ready for them. All the swallows we saw from that area seemed to head inland, taking a west to southwest direction. None of the birds appeared to make it as far as the Grand River. Interestingly, Kevin Metcalf, who was leading a group at Headlands Beach State Park west of the river at the same time, saw no swallows until he took his group east of the river. By 11:15 a severe thunderstorm hit the area, and no swallows were seen after that.

In the days that passed, swallows were seen in Ashtabula and Cuyahoga counties. At Hamlin Beach in New York 579 were counted on November 6. One was found dead on a porch in Lakewood, Cuyahoga County, on 20 November. That bird was deposited with the Cleveland Museum of Natural History collections.

Prior to the early 1970s cave swallows (the southwestern race *P. f. pelodoma*) were found only in the Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico and a few other smaller caves in Texas. In the mid-70s cave swallows began nesting in

culverts and under bridges in Texas. Within a few years, these swallows had begun nesting over the southern two-thirds of Texas and up into south-central New Mexico. During this same period reports of the species began to come from southern Texas during the winter. They began showing up at Cape May, New Jersey, and have become annual there in the fall. Birds started visiting Great Lakes shorelines within the last ten years.

Cave swallows can also be found in Florida. These, however, come from the West Indian race *P. f. fulva* and may well be a different species entirely. Unlike the southwestern population, Florida's has not increased markedly in size. All those seen at Cape May and elsewhere in the Northeast and Great Lakes have been of the southwestern race. If trends continue, cave swallows may become annual visitors to Ohio, and will be well worth looking for along Lake Erie's central basin in November.



Dorsal view of a cave swallow found dead on a Lakewood front porch. Photo taken in situ by Jim McCarty 20 Nov 2005.



Joey Shively captured this portrait at Crane Creek SP 13 Nov.