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The Ohio Cardinal is a quarterly publication devoted to the study and appreciation of Ohio’s birdlife. The Ohio Cardinal exists to provide a permanent and timely record of the abundance and distribution of birds in Ohio; to help document the occurrence of rare species in the state; to provide information on identification of birds; and to provide information on birding areas within Ohio. The Ohio Cardinal invites readers to submit articles on unusual occurrences of birds, bird distribution within the state, birding areas in Ohio, identification tips, and other aspects of ornithology. Bird reports and photographs are welcome from any area of the state. Report forms are not a necessity but will be supplied upon request. Unusual species should be documented, and forms to do so are available upon request from the Editor, Publisher, and Records Committee Secretary.

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

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

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

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

Review species reported this summer included tricolored heron, Mississippi kite (two), Eurasian collared-dove (numerous), scissor-tailed flycatcher (two), and common raven (three), a list impressive less for its length.
than for including two new breeding species for Ohio in the modern era, and the possible return of a species that last bred here over a century ago. Shorebird migration continued as usual through most of the summer, with both late and early reports of this prodigious migrants during June. Little habitat for most shorebirds, beyond the beleaguered beach at Conneaut and drawn-down upper ends of municipal and state park reservoirs, was available. Daylong censuses of birds at mighty Ottawa NWR, for example, produced only three spotted sandpipers and 19 killdeer on 3 June, then three spotted and 34 killdeer on 1 Jul. Still, 26 shorebird species were reported during the two months of the summer season elsewhere. Reports of interest from the NW marshes were sparse overall this season.

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

The Reports follow the nomenclature and taxonomic order of the 7th edition of the AOU Check-list of North American Birds (1998), including the 48th Supplement (July 2007), except for the capitalization of English names of birds, where we follow standard English usage. Underlined names of species indicate those on the OBRC Review List; documentation is needed to add reports of these species to official state records, or to attributions (i.e., reporters’ names) in the Reports. Where supplied, county names appear italicized. Unless numbers are specified, sightings refer to single birds. Abbreviations, conventions, locations, and symbols used in the Reports should be readily understood, with the possible exceptions of the following: ad—adult; alt—alternate (breeding) plumage; BCSP=Buck Cr SP in Clark; BIWA=Big Isla WA in Marion; BSBO=Black Swamp Bird Observatory; CCE=Crane Cr estuary in ON; CPNWR=Cedar Point NWR in Lucas; CVNP=Cuyahoga Valley Natl Pk in Cuyahoga and Summit; Deer Cr WA is in Pickaway/Fayette; Dike 143 is the Gordon Park impoundment in Cleveland; EFS=East Fork SP in Clermont; eop=end of the period, in this case 31 July 2007; EHS=East Hdr SP in Ottawa; fde=“in trust of,” said of data conveyed on behalf of another person; Funk WA is in Wayne; Gilmore Ponds is in Butler; GLSM=Grand Lk St Marys in Mercer/Augusta; HBSP=Heads Beach SP in Lake; HBSP=Heads Beach SNP in Lake; Hoover=Hoover Res in Franklin/Delaware; HWS=Hueston Woods SP (Butler/Pleasant); imm=immature; Killbuck=Killbuck Marsh WA in Wayne/Holmes; KPWA=Killed Pleas WA in Wyandot; LSR=Lakeshore Reservation (MP) in Lake; Magee=Magee Marsh WA in Ottawa/Lucas; MBSP=Maumee Bay SP in Lucas; MCWS=Mill Creek Wildlife Sanctuary in Mahoning; Metzger=Metzger Marsh WA in Lucas; MP=Metropark; m obs=many observers; MWW=Miami-Whitewater Wetlands in Hamilton; NWR=National Wildlife Refuge; OBBA=Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas, second edition; OBRC=Ohio Bird Records Committee; ODOC=Ohio Division of Wildlife; ONWR=Ottawa NWR in Ottawa/Lucas; ONW=monthly bird census at ONW; PCWA=Pike Creek WA in Sandusky; ph=photograph; Res=Reservoir; Res’=Reservation; SCBC=Greater Akron Audubon Society Summit County Bird Census of 15-24 June; SF=State Forest; SNP=State Nature Preserve; SP=State Park; Springville Marsh SNP is in Seneca; SVWA=Spring Valley WA in Greene/Warren; VOAC=Voice of America Park in Butler; WA=Wildlife Area.

The Reports: Summer 2007

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Red-breasted merganser: Odd reports came from a Findlay res 6 Jun (J. Taber), Kelleys Isl 16 Jun (T. Bartlett), and Conneaut on 10 Jul (C. Holt).
Ruddy duck: As usual, apparently nonbreeding summering birds showed up. The Paulding sewage lagoons hosted five drakes 1-14 Jun (D&M Dunakin). The Hardin wetlands had three males and two females 2 Jun (R. Counts) and three males 4 Jul, then four on 9 Jul (D. Sanders). Similarly inconclusive reports came from Trumbull 3 Jun (E. Kistler) and another Hardin site 7 Jul (C. Hoagstrom).

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

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

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

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

Least bittern: Away from traditional spots were single birds seen in Wood 9 Jun (C. Anderson), at Lake Logan in Hocking 14 Jun (J. Alexander), at MCWS 2 Jul (C. Jones), at MWW 10 Jul (J. Kappa), at Mentor Lagoons 22-25 Jul (J. Talkington & R. Hannikian), and one at Garfield Res 24 Jul (C. Holt). All nests were confirmed by D. Kramer.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Turkey vulture: Unusual was a single large scattered group of 375 birds seen in Tuscarawas 12 Jul (E. Schlabach).
Osprey: The ODOM estimated at least 43 nests in the state, and ~75 young hatched. Decidedly unusual was four fledglings at a Salt Fork Res. nest in late Jul (J. Larson).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Black-bellied plover: Usually scarce in summer. Probably sitting out the breeding season were three in basic plumage on 13 Jun at Meitzer (K. Kaufman). The only returnees reported were two at Conneaut on 19 Jul (C. Holt).
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American golden-plover: Unreported to us during the summer period.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Short-billed dowitcher: The vanguard was one at Camp Dennison of all places, on 7 Jul (J. Brown), with ~20 the following day at PCWA (C. Caldwell), where by the 14th 100+ were present (C. Pierce) and ~150 on the 22nd (B. Whan). Two appeared down at Burr Oak SP in Morgan 27 Jul (G. Crippen).
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Wilson’s snipe: Late enough to be a breeder was one at the Hardin wetland 2 Jun (R. Counts). M. Shieldcastle had one in Erie 7 Jun and another in Sandusky 6 Jun. G. Cottier reported a female with two chicks crossing a Lucas road 11 Jun. On schedule as a migrant was one at KPWA 28 Jul (P. Gardner).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Short-billed dowitcher: The vanguard was one at Camp Dennison of all places, on 7 Jul (J. Brown), with ~20 the following day at PCWA (C. Caldwell), where by the 14th 100+ were present (C. Pierce) and ~150 on the 22nd (B. Whan). Two appeared down at Burr Oak SP in Morgan 27 Jul (G. Crippen).
Wilson’s snipe: Late enough to be a breeder was one at the Hardin wetland 2 Jun (R. Counts). M. Shieldcastle had one in Erie 7 Jun and another in Sandusky 6 Jun. G. Cottier reported a female with two chicks crossing a Lucas road 11 Jun. On schedule as a migrant was one at KPWA 28 Jul (P. Gardner).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Black-billed cuckoo: As always, with fewer reports than those for its cousin: for example the 15-24 Jun SCBC found eight black-billed cuckoos versus 61 yellow-billeds in Summit.
Northern saw-whet owl: T. Bartlett (m obs) reported an adult on Kellesys Isl on 15 Jun, and 1-2 calling elsewhere on the island the following day, one possibly a young bird of the year. See article in this issue.

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


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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Red-eyed vireo: Almost 20 at Magee as late as 4 Jun surely were mostly migrants (K. Kaufman).
Common raven: Thorough follow-up has yet to be done for brief sightings on 12 Jun of extremely wary ravens in an east-central county, indicating the possibility of breeding there (S. Albaugh).

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

Bank swallow: Large aggregations included 300 at BCS\&P 8 Jul (D. Overacker) and 450 at Conneaut 24 Jul (C. Holt).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nashville warbler: J. Heflich, P. Kellner, and J. Evans witnessed one at close range in GRWA on 15 Jul.
Northern parula: Well-reported, with finds in the northern counties: one singing in Seneca 1 Jun (N. Fensler), one or two in Coshocton 6 Jun-4 Jul (L. Deininger), four at Lk Loramie SP in Shelby 8 Jun (T. Shively), a singer in Knox 13 Jun (G. Cowell), another in Fulton 25 Jun (R. Schroeder), and one perhaps unmated in Williams 1 Jul (J. Grabmeier).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Northern waterthrush: Unusual was one netted in a banding operation in Vinton 26 Jul (B. Placier), as was one banded at Springfield Marsh 16 Jul and another on Kelleys Isl a few days later (T. Bartlett). J. Pogacnik had one
confirmed and one probable nester in the Lake MPs during the period.

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

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

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

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

**Hooded warbler:** In the western counties where the species is sparse, a male was in Logan 14 Jun (T. Shively), and a possible nest was in Hancock during the period (S. Baxter 15 B. Hardesty).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Rose-breasted grosbeak:** Echoing spring abundances—or perhaps more accurately necessary changes in food sources—summer reports at feeders abounded. J. Hefflich called them “especially common” in Ashtabula/Trumbull, and observers reported them during the nesting season from the south in Clermont, Hamilton, and Montgomery.
Blue grosbeak: Reports of this species exploded this summer. They are too numerous to expound in detail, and readers are advised to visit the range map for the first Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas to include the following counties with records from this summer alone: Lucas, Richland, Jefferson, Fayette, Clark, Monroe, Meigs, Gallia, Lawrence, Ross, Coshocton, Montgomery, Shelby, Champaign, Logan, Adams, Pickaway, Franklin, Athens, Clermont, Hamilton, Tuscarawas, Scioto, and Butler. Despite increased numbers due to the OBBA’s improved coverage, and increasing knowledge of its habitats, this species still seems to be on the increase in Ohio.

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


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

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

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

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

Further Afield

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Potential reporters are well served to familiarize themselves with their local, and if possible, statewide birdlife before submitting a report. Record keepers are more likely to accept an observation of a rarity when the observer’s overall report indicates a familiarity with what is normally to be expected in their area. For instance, a report of an out-of-range Carolina Chickadee in the Oak Openings with no additional comment may be nothing more than a typo, but it may also indicate a lack of familiarity with chickadee ranges in Ohio. If this hypothetical observer was indeed unfamiliar with Ohio chickadee ranges, then it seems very likely that he or she did not make the necessary effort to distinguish between the purported Carolina and the vastly more likely Black-capped Chickadee. Whenever an observer provides a well-rounded seasonal report, including sightings of expected species alongside any rarities, compilers gain a better grasp of the observer’s experience. Compilers appreciate observers who conscientiously acknowledge a lack of experience. Always be conservative when submitting a report; if in doubt, leave it out. Our responsibility as reporters and as compilers is to provide the most trustworthy and accurate record for future researchers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

W.E. Saunders (1907) gives a haunting description of a snowstorm on 10 October 1906 that dumped over a foot of snow near the southeast corner of
Lake Huron. On 18 October, hundreds of birds were found dead along the shore of Lake Huron by Newton Tripp, who reported the disaster to Saunders. Saunders arrived on 21 October and counted 1,845 dead birds of 26 species along a two-mile stretch of beach in only two to three hours. Among the dead were 24 saw-whet owls. “The saw-whets were a surprise. They are rare in western Ontario, and one sees them only at intervals of many years. Evidently they migrate in considerable numbers.”

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

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

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

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

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

Williams-Siegr

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

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

In 2005, an owl in the woods, banders and trained volunteers carefully removed them and place them in a bag to keep them calm during our walk up the hill to our banding lab. Each is banded with a 4-short band specially developed to accommodate the saw-whet’s small size. We check the overall condition of each bird and take a variety of measurements. We are able to age most owls by looking at the wing feathers, as the sequence of replacement of these feathers varies with age. Females are generally larger than males, and sex is assigned based on wing length and mass (Brinker 1997); however 18.5% of the 113 owls captured at Buzzard’s Roost from 2003-2006 were not assigned to sex because the measurements fell in the overlap range.

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

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

Owls were heard vocalizing on 16 of 24 nights in November 2005 from perches near our net lanes and sometimes in flight around the study area. The saw-whets make a variety of chirps, twitters, and screams in addition to the advertising toot call in the vicinity of our banding operation. We think the owls
that vocalize near the nets may have already been banded, and we have found that we rarely recapture an owl in the same net run. A few bill-snap or make soft chitter calls while in the hand. The chitter call has also been heard upon release, eliciting soft chitters from the woods in response.

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

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

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

Three other banding stations monitored saw-whet owls in Ohio during the fall of 2006 (Table 1). The number of saw-whets captured per net hour is similar between sites, suggesting that consistent monitoring in appropriate habitat may yield capture rates similar to the banding station near Chillicothe. While effort is not directly comparable between stations, capture rates at the Buzzard’s Roost breading station of 0.23 to 0.01 owls per 12m net hour in 2004 and 2006 compare well to reported capture rates at Assateague, Virginia in 1992 and Cape May, New Jersey in 1993 of 2.11 and 2.83 owls per 10m net per 100 hours respectively (Brinker, 1997).

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Banding Station</th>
<th>HY</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>AY</th>
<th>SY</th>
<th>Total Owls</th>
<th>Nights</th>
<th>Net Hours</th>
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<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
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2006 left many banding stations wondering where all the owls were. We did not capture any owls banded by other stations but we did recapture our first owl we had banded during a previous season. This hatch-year female was originally banded on 29 October 2005 and recaptured 23 November 2006. It is unclear whether this owl’s arrival nearly a month later in 2006 was attributable to change in breeding status (from a young bird to a potential breeder in 2006) or was indicative of a seemingly delayed migration. An after-second-year female banded on 1 November 2005 at Buzzard’s Roost was recaptured at Long Point Bird Observatory, Ontario on 15 November 2006. Tom Bartlett reported seven saw-whets calling on 28 December 2006 on Kelleys Island after the Buzzard’s Roost station had closed for the season (Whan, 2007). Reports from many saw-whet stations in the East that suggested that migration was delayed in 2006 seem to be supported by these observations. Consistent monitoring and continued cooperation among banding stations is needed to gain a clearer picture of the movements of these owls.

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<td>NE Seneca Co.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matt &amp; Deb Plots</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Kashner</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4</td>
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</table>
Northern Saw-Whet Owls in Ross County

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

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

Acknowledgments

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

Literature Cited

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Originally named Germany when first settled in 1795, the name was changed in 1861 to Camp Dennison in honor of the U.S. Army training post located here during the Civil War. The camp was in turn named for William Dennison, Ohio’s governor at the beginning of the war. There are several historical buildings and markers memorializing those times, but few outsiders
are aware of them. With the war's end, residents changed the town's name to Grand Valley, but the railroad refused to acknowledge the change on their schedules and continued to call the local station Camp Dennison, and so it has remained since 1861. Today the railroad is gone and the old railroad bed is part of the Loveland-Madeira bike/hike trail.

In 1946 the Ohio Gravel Company began operations in Camp Dennison. Later the gravel pits were acquired by Martin Marietta Aggregates, which continued the gravel-mining operation until the late 1990s, when they ceased operations. For the next several years the Camp Dennison gravel pits remained inactive, and there was much speculation about their fate.

All people said, they are just gravel pits, and in these days of rapid loss of critical habitats such as wetlands and forests, it is difficult to justify a conservation campaign to preserve an artificial water-filled crater. Around this time a developer proposed a 600-house development on the site, and the future of this waterfowl refuge seemed bleak.

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

Some readers may remember the late Worth Randle, one of Ohio's birding pioneers and finest naturalists. Randle co-authored the 1953 Birds of Southwestern Ohio with Emerson Kempsie. In that work he made no mention of the Camp Dennison gravel pits in his list of local birding sites, but by the mid-1970s he had become a regular visitor to the pits, and virtually put it on the local birding map. Randle was a meticulous note taker, but after his death many of his early records were lost. We do however have many of his later records from about 1984 on. For many years he had an arrangement with managers of the then-active gravel pits whereby he was granted access to the pits on Mondays. He often visited the site on Monday mornings during the late '70s and '80s and was more than willing to invite along any birders who cared to show up. Around 1991 Martin Marietta's policy changed, and from then on even Randle was denied access.

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

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

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

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

Before continuing and with all due respect, just a caveat for northern Ohio birders. This is southwestern Ohio, not Lake Erie. Waterfowl occur in this extreme southern part of the state in considerably smaller numbers than on the Great Lakes. Also consider this is a relatively small part of water, probably around 150 acres. That said, there have been 32 species of waterfowl (Anseriformes) recorded at Camp Dennison, not including a well-documented whooper swan (one, on 1/23/00), which was presumed to be an escaped bird (some didn't want it presumed). Waterfowl rarities recorded at Camp D have included: greater white-fronted goose (five, on 3/1/03), snow goose (three records, 20 on 1/20/07, caecling goose (twice, with five on 1/22/05), tundra swan (three times, with 18 on 12/3/02), trumpeter swan (one, Jan. 10-22, 2000), Eurasian wigeon (one, on 21/07), greater scaup (at least twenty records but 15 on 11/23/02), harlequin duck (one, 11/27/05), long-tailed duck (one, 1/26-2/3/07), surf scoter (twice, six on 12/4/93 and one on 3/22/07), white-winged scoter (twice, one on 5/1/00 and three on 2/10/04). In addition a couple of rare grebes have been found: eared grebe (one, 11/18/06) and red-necked grebe (as many as two birds were seen from 1/4-19/03).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Acknowledgements

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

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

A History of Camp Dennison:
http://home.fuse.net/campdennison/camphistory.htm

The Village of Indian Hill:
http://www.ci.indian-hill.oh.us/

The Cincinnati Enquirer:

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http://www.enquirer.com/editions/2004/05/09/loc_grandvalley09.html

Cincinnati.com, Community
http://frontier.cincinnati.com/communities/display.asp?commName=Camp+Dennison

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