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CARDINAL



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Winter, March 10
Spring, June 10
Summer, August 10
Autumn, December 10

Report forms are not a necessity but will be supplied if requested. Unusual or rare species should be documented and forms will be provided upon request.

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Cover: Little blue heron young in nest at West Sister Island, Ohio on June 25, 1983 photographed by Ed Pierce.

Birding the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area

Brian Walsh

The purpose of this article is to shed light on the opportunity one might have in birding a portion of the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area (hereafter referred to as CVNRA). Obviously, it would be a ponderous task to detail the entire CVNRA in this article, thus the intent is to give the reader an idea of what birds might be found and classified as specific to a small cross-section of the park. Also, this article would like to portray a number of exciting accidental and migrant species which have been seen in the area in recent spring and summer seasons, hopefully demonstrating the attraction the area has as a birding oasis.

The area of the park that is to be described can be divided into four unique and yet geographically close niches that are easily accessible from either Riverview or Akron-Peninsula Roads, which in turn both intersect State Route 303 in the Village of Peninsula. These areas are known to this author as the following:

- (1) "Beaver Pond"
- (2) Horseshoe Pond
- (3) Deep Lock Quarry
- (4) Virginia Kendall Ledges

While these areas all have their proximity to the Cuyahoga River as a common feature, they also have some distinct characteristics that are noteworthy to the discerning birder.

Due to the fact that the greater part of this author's observations were done from March to June of 1985, the article is intended to portray this area's attractiveness to both residents and migrants. Therefore, the information supplied in this article is meant as general reference and nesting documentation is to be regarded in terms of "possible breeding" or "probable breeding" as defined in the "Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas Instruction Manual, 1983-1987." Due to the enormous amount of field study required to meet the manual's "confirmed breeding" criteria, the author would rather make this area's attraction to birds in general a priority, at the same time respecting the need for more data to meet the manual's criteria.

- (1) "Beaver Pond"

This area possibly exemplifies the most remarkable change in habitat that the new federal park offers. Formerly the sight of an automobile repair shop, the recent activity of a beaver family has engineered a small marsh among cat-tails and shrubby fields, which

in turn has made it more attractive to a plethora of birds in both volume and variation.

This small wetland straddles the old Ohio Canal and is easily accessible by the former canal's towpath at the intersection of Riverview and Ira Roads. There is also ample space for viewing directly west of the pond along Riverview Road. Recent observations by the author and others concludes the following species are indicative of the area:

Canada Goose (goslings observed)	Willow Flycatcher
Mallard (ducklings observed)	Barn Swallow
Wood Duck (ducklings observed)	Tree Swallow (nesting observed)
Great Blue Heron	Rough-winged Swallow
Green-backed Heron	Bank Swallow
Virginia Rail	Marsh Wren
Spotted Sandpiper	Eastern Bluebird
American Woodcock	Blue-winged Warbler
Common Snipe	Common Yellowthroat
Belted Kingfisher	Field Sparrow
Eastern Kingbird	Swamp Sparrow
Eastern Phoebe	

These species are fairly descriptive to the area and are common through the spring and summer seasons. In addition to the above species though, the following attractions were observed this year:

Pied-billed Grebe	Great Egret
American Black Duck	Least Bittern
Blue-winged Teal	American Bittern
American Wigeon	

In addition to the characteristic and uncommon birds noted above, the author has observed a variety of migratory birds over and above what has been listed, such as kinglets, warblers, and sparrows. More common residents also make this area home as they do the rest of the CVNRA. The priority in this article is to focus on differing habitats and their attraction with respect to the other niches depicted in this article.

In late March and early April, the author and others observed hundreds of ducks moving over the area at dusk (almost 7:30 to be exact). Most of these were black ducks, mallards, wigeon, and teal. Although most of the ducks lit on or near the pond, the black ducks preferred the river (100 yards to the east). During this same time frame, the observer should listen for the PEENT! of the woodcock and the snipe winnowing. Virginia rail can be heard grunting among the cat-tails about the pond. The amount of swallows flying over the pond is a spectacle at this time of year. Common raptors include turkey vulture, red-

tailed hawk, kestrel, and great-horned owl. The wetter areas in the vicinity of the pond, both north and south along Riverview Road, have traditionally been reliable for orchard oriole.

The observer should check out the quarry area directly west of the "Beaver Pond" and Riverview Road. This winter a northern shrike wintered this quarry area. Also, this observer saw pairs of scarlet tanagers, kingbirds, and colonies of bank swallows around the quarry perimeter this spring.

(2) Horseshoe Pond

This small niche of the CVNRA lying at the northwest corner of Riverview and Major Roads is a former Christmas Tree farm that has an unique attraction for species that thrive in pastures, brushy tangles, and small pines. Some taller pines interspersed with deciduous stands also make this area a natural oasis for raptors. A small "U" shaped pond lends the area its name, and the pond's run-off forms a small creek providing water and habitat for a variety of species. White-tailed deer are permanent residents of this area.

Access to Horseshoe Pond may be made off Major Road approximately one mile west of the intersection of Major and Riverview Roads. A small lot at this location affords the observer a conventional place to park. Due to the fact that this area can be very dense in tangles and brush, many birders park to the side of Major Road and walk the lengths in both directions without challenging the thickets.

Recent observations by the author have concluded that the following species are indicative of the area:

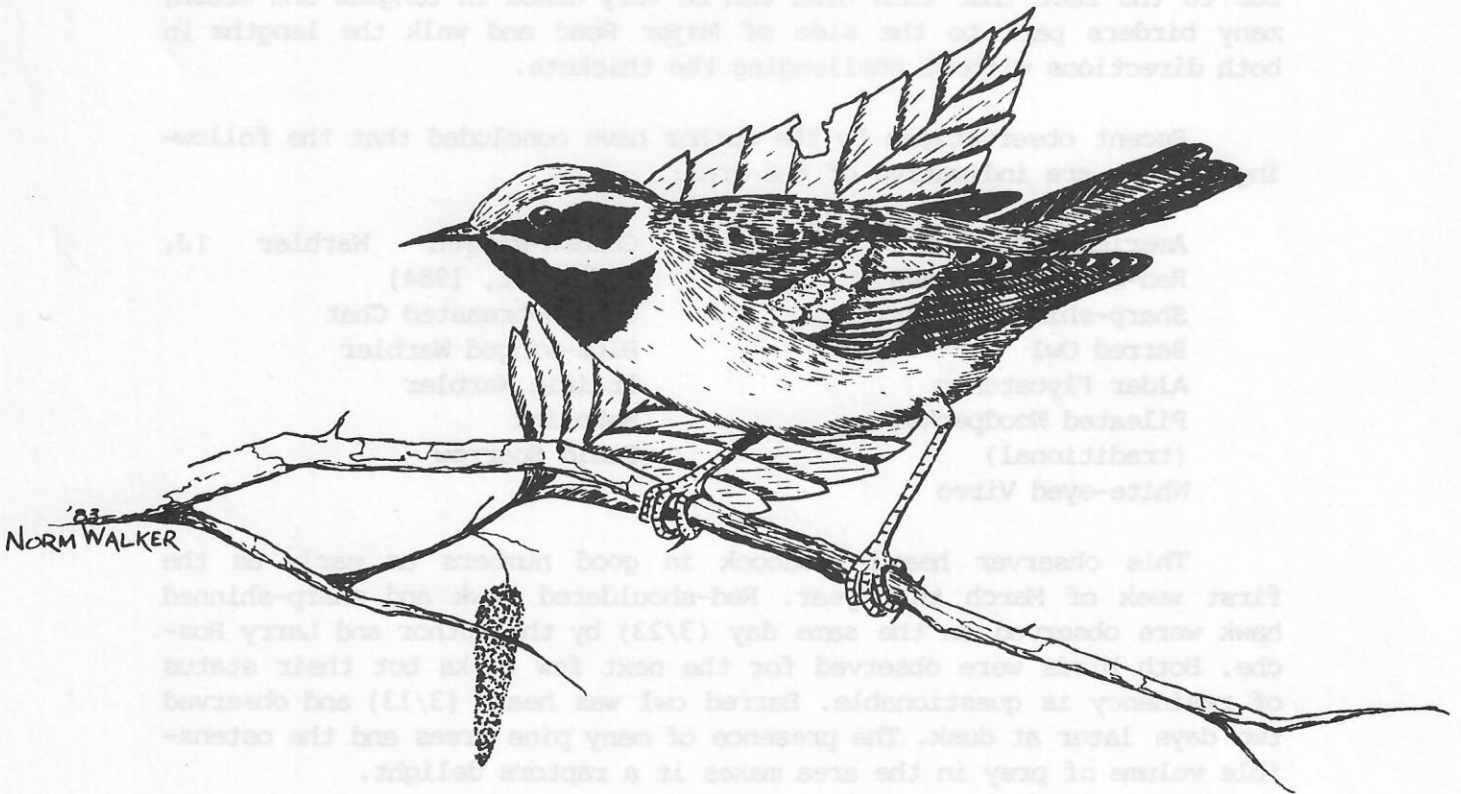
American Woodcock	Golden-winged Warbler (J.
Red-shouldered Hawk	& M. Wert, 1984)
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Yellow-breasted Chat
Barred Owl	Blue-winged Warbler
Alder Flycatcher	Prairie Warbler
Pileated Woodpecker	Bobolink
(traditional)	Field Sparrow
White-eyed Vireo	

This observer heard woodcock in good numbers as early as the first week of March this year. Red-shouldered hawk and sharp-shinned hawk were observed on the same day (3/23) by the author and Larry Rosche. Both birds were observed for the next few weeks but their status of residency is questionable. Barred owl was heard (3/13) and observed two days later at dusk. The presence of many pine trees and the ostensible volume of prey in the area makes it a raptors delight.

The main attraction of Horseshoe Pond has been and continues to be the prairie warblers. Nesting has been documented in the past and due to their ostentatious song they are easily observed in late April and throughout May. Bobolinks have also been observed traditionally at Horseshoe, although their numbers vary yearly and were somewhat scarce this year. By walking Major Road the observer should be able to hear and see white-eyed vireos and chats in the larger bushes. Blue-winged warblers are very prevalent here, and the possibility of a golden-winged seems heightened (last observation was 1984). Although one would not think this area to be conducive to the pileated woodpecker, numerous sightings the past few years make the possibility of its observation unsurprising. Juncos were observed in the pines around the pond in the last week of April this year.

(3) Deep Lock Quarry

Probably the most frequented area of the four by birders, Deep Lock Quarry is easily accessible from its entrance off Riverview Road just a few yards south of Major Road. Because it has been and continues to be a part of the Akron Municipal Park System, it contains a network of established trails that allow for unencumbered access to its denser areas.



This author would like to describe Deep Lock Quarry as a mesic deciduous woodland, however, due to its proximity to the Cuyahoga River, the woods slope down into a steep river valley, creating an environmental gradient where the changing altitude and flora allow for differing habitats conducive to many birds.

Probably the best way to describe Deep Lock's attraction as a birding spot would be by its landmarks, both natural and man-made. The upper altitudes of the park contain trails leading into and around an old sandstone quarry from which the park takes its name. Midway down the park's slopes and closer to the river is an old lock where the Ohio Canal once passed and, perpendicular to this, are railroad tracks which this observer has found to be a very good observation area. Lastly, there are trails which follow the river north, and a towpath that runs south along the old canal, past cornfields and a wooded margin.

The following species are indicative of Deep Lock Quarry and are most likely found near their respective landmarks:

(A) Upper Trails and Quarry Area

Northern Bobwhite	Veery
Broad-winged Hawk	Black-capped Chickadee
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	White-breasted Nuthatch
Black-billed Cuckoo	Tufted Titmouse
Downy Woodpecker	Red-eyed Vireo
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Hooded Warbler
Acadian Flycatcher	American Redstart
Willow Flycatcher	Rufous-sided Towhee
Wood Thrush	Chipping Sparrow

This area has taller deciduous trees with some pines. The forest floor is filled with sparse undergrowth and ravines.

(B) Lock Area and Railroad Tracks Near Bridge

Ruffed Grouse
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (nesting activity observed)
Yellow-throated Vireo
Cerulean Warbler (nesting activity observed)
Yellow-throated Warbler (recent nests, none observed 1985)

This area is one of increasing humidity, lower canopy, and denser undergrowth. Stagnant water in old lock is home to many insects and thus, good for warblers during spring. Sycamores along railroad tracks have been specific for gnatcatchers and cerulean warblers.

(C) River Trails and Towpath East of Tracks

Canada Goose	Red-bellied Woodpecker
Mallard	Tree Swallow
Wood Duck	Rough-winged Swallow
Blue-winged Teal	Cedar Waxwing
Great-blue Heron	Blue-winged Warbler
Green-backed Heron	Common Yellowthroat
Killdeer	Yellow Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Red-winged Blackbird
Red-tailed Hawk	Northern Oriole
American Kestrel	Scarlet Tanager
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Indigo Bunting
Belted Kingfisher	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Northern Flicker	

This area allows for direct access to water, dense undergrowth, and many insects. Cornfields east of towpath are a haven for doves, cardinals, and blackbirds. River margin specific for geese, ducks, swallows, and herons.

Obviously there is a crossover between these areas by different species but once again, this article is trying to portray species attraction by habitat. The author feels that the landmarks and their respective species mentioned above are the best bets for observation by the reader.

Noteworthy occurrences at Deep Lock include the presence of broad-winged hawk and turkey vulture each year. This area is always reliable for cerulian warbler and yellow-throated vireo along the railroad tracks near the bridge. Phoebes have nested under that same bridge every year in the author's experience. The upper trails are noted for nesting hooded warblers and American redstarts.

Deep Lock Quarry has been and still is a special attraction for warbler migration. The author observed a large movement of yellow-rumped warblers as early as April 3rd of this year. A short walk along the upper trails and railroad tracks in May should net the casual observer twenty to twenty-five species, including mourning warbler and, in recent years, yellow-throated warbler.

(4) Virginia Kendall Ledges

Virginia Kendall Park lies east of Akron-Peninsula Road between Wetmore Road and State Route 303. This area of the CVNRA is the only area in this article lying on the east side of the river valley. The ledges area of the park can be found off Truxell Road, which runs east and west through the outer area of the park and has a well developed network of trails for easy access.

The ledges area has been chosen for this article specifically for its unique habitat. Containing rock ledges of sandstone conglomerate, the cool atmosphere and deep ravines of the ledges allow for mixed stands of deciduous trees and hemlock. It is the combination of these features that make the area conducive to the following species:

Ruffed Grouse
Hermit Thrush
Solitary Vireo

Black-throated Green Warbler
Ovenbird

The presence of numerous hemlocks at the ledges of Virginia Kendall is the ostensible attraction to the above species. The solitary vireo, hermit thrush, and black-throated green warbler nest in Ohio, preferably in "hemlock habitats" or "hemlock forests," according to the "Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas Instruction Manual 1983-1987." Saw-whet owls and red-breasted nuthatches have also been casual visitors to the area (1981), although none were observed this year. Lastly, ruffed grouse have endured throughout the whole of Virginia Kendall Park, and are consistently observed at the Kendall Lake area across the road from the ledges.

Summary and Acknowledgement

Without further explanation, in 1985 this observer has seen over 150 species of birds in the spring-summer season of the four areas cited in this article. There is no doubt in my mind that 200 species may be observed in the CVNRA in one year. What this means to the Ohio birder is that the CVNRA offers one of the better locations for inland birding in the state.

The author would like to acknowledge the help of Jeff and Missy Wert, Larry Rosche, and Ed Pierce for their input and assistance. Also, the "Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas Instruction Manual, 1983-1987" was most helpful in correlating and supporting information collected in the field regarding the specific areas cited in this article.

Bibliography

Bart, Jonathan, Peterjohn, Bruce, and Rice, Dan. "Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas Instruction Manual 1983-1987". Division of Natural Areas and Preserves (Ohio Department of Natural Resources" and Ohio Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit (Ohio State University), in cooperation with the Ohio Audubon Council and The Ohio Biological Survey, 1983.

The Reports

Summer Nesting
1 June - 31 July 1985
Tom Bartlett

This report continues the new form of reporting for the Summer Nesting Season first used in Volume 4, No. 2. The late Spring and early Fall migrants have been reported separately from the summering and nesting species. Also, though the 177 species nesting and the 21 species summering in Ohio in 1985 have been listed only certain noteworthy species among them have been separately discussed.

Again in this issue every submitted documentation will be reviewed by the Ohio Cardinal Records Committee. Those reports noted with an asterisk have a written documentation or photo on file which has been submitted to the committee. Those reports which were not accepted by a majority (three) of the Committee will be published in a later issue. The symbol (D) after the species name designates those birds the Ohio Cardinal Records Committee suggests be documented.

In the Special Reports section of this report, the number of each species sighted is included unless only one bird was seen and then no number is designated. The location of the sighting is given with as much preciseness as possible to enable the reader to know where certain birds can be found. The county containing the location is identified for each location only at the first instance the location is mentioned. However, a cross-reference chart showing each location mentioned and its county or counties appears at the end of the report. If the total area of the location occupies more than one county, an effort is made to specify only the county in which the observation occurred.

This report follows the current AOU taxonomy, common names and arrangement of taxa.

Breeding or Summering Birds

1985

The following list is of 198 species and one hybrid of nesting or summering birds in Ohio during 1985. Those species marked with an asterisk (*) were not thought to have nested. Those that are underlined are of note and are discussed in the following Special Reports section.

Common Loon *
Pied-billed Grebe
Horned Grebe *

Double-crested Cormorant *
American Bittern
Least Bittern

Great Blue Heron
Great Egret
Snowy Egret
Little Blue Heron
Tricolored Heron *
Cattle Egret
Green-backed Heron
Black-crowned Night-Heron
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron
Mute Swan *
Snow Goose *
Canada Goose
Wood Duck
Green-winged Teal
American Black Duck
Mallard
Northern Pintail
Blue-winged Teal
Northern Shoveler
Gadwall
American Wigeon *
Canvasback *
Redhead
Ring-necked Duck *
Lesser Scaup
Hooded Merganser
Common Merganser *
Red-breasted Merganser *
Ruddy Duck
Black Vulture
Turkey vulture
Osprey *
Bald Eagle
Northern Harrier
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Cooper's Hawk
Red-shouldered Hawk
Broad-winged Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
American Kestrel
Ring-necked Pheasant
Ruffed Grouse
Wild Turkey
Northern Bobwhite
King Rail
Virginia Rail
Sora
Common Moorhen
American Coot

Killdeer
Spotted Sandpiper
Upland Sandpiper
Whimbrel *
Red Knot *
Common Snipe
American Woodcock
Laughing Gull *
Little Gull *
Bonaparte's Gull *
Ring-billed Gull
Herring Gull
Common Tern
Black Tern
Rock Dove
Mourning Dove
Black-billed Cuckoo
Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Common Barn-Owl
Eastern Screech-Owl
Great Horned Owl
Barred Owl
Long-eared Owl
Short-eared Owl
Common Nighthawk
Chuck-will's-widow
Whip-poor-will
Chimney Swift
Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Belted Kingfisher
Red-headed Woodpecker
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
Eastern Wood-Pewee
Acadian Flycatcher
Alder Flycatcher
Willow Flycatcher
Least Flycatcher
Eastern Phoebe
Great Crested Flycatcher
Eastern Kingbird
Horned Lark
Purple Martin
Tree Swallow
Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Bank Swallow

Cliff Swallow
Barn Swallow
Blue Jay
American Crow
Black-capped Chickadee
Carolina Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
Red-breasted Nuthatch
White-breasted Nuthatch
Brown Creeper
Carolina Wren
Bewick's Wren
House Wren
Winter Wren
Sedge Wren
Marsh Wren
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Eastern Bluebird
Veery
Swainson's Thrush *
Hermit Thrush
Wood Thrush
American Robin
Gray Catbird
Northern Mockingbird
Brown Thrasher
Cedar Waxwing
Loggerhead Shrike
European Starling
White-eyed Vireo
Bell's Vireo
Solitary Vireo
Yellow-throated Vireo
Warbling Vireo
Red-eyed Vireo
Blue-winged Warbler
Golden Winged Warbler
Brewster's Warbler
Northern Parula
Yellow Warbler
Chestnut-sided Warbler
Magnolia Warbler
Black-throated Green Warbler
Blackburnian Warbler
Yellow-throated Warbler
Pine Warbler
Prairie Warbler
Blackpoll Warbler *
Cerulean Warbler

Black-and-white Warbler
American Redstart
Prothonotary Warbler
Worm-eating Warbler
Ovenbird
Northern Waterthrush
Louisiana Waterthrush
Kentucky Warbler
Mourning Warbler
Common Yellow-throat
Hooded Warbler
Canada Warbler *
Yellow-breasted Chat
Summer Tanager
Scarlet Tanager
Northern Cardinal
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Blue Grosbeak
Indigo Bunting
Dickcissel
Rufous-sided Towhee
Bachman's Sparrow
Chipping Sparrow
Field Sparrow
Vesper Sparrow
Lark Sparrow
Savannah Sparrow
Grasshopper Sparrow
Henslow's Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Swamp Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
White-throated Sparrow *
Bobolink
Red-winged Blackbird
Eastern Meadowlark
Western Meadowlark
Common Grackle
Brown-headed Cowbird
Orchard Oriole
Northern Oriole
Purple Finch
House Finch
American Goldfinch
House Sparrow

Special Reports

The following are notes and observations of those birds underlined above.

Common Loon

6/1 Killdeer Plains WA (Wyandot Co) (2) (KA); 6/11 and 7/16 Bayview (Erie Co) (PJ).

Pied-billed Grebe

Many reports commented that numbers were down, but Magee Marsh WA (Ottawa Co) had a great year, for example on 6/13 over 30 young were observed (TB).

Horned Grebe

Summered at Cleveland (Cuyahoga Co) (m. obs.).

Double-crested Cormorant

Numerous reports for western Lake Erie area with number from 1 to 12 individuals; One bird summered at Cleveland (TL).

American Bittern

A pair nested in the Cuyahoga Valley NRA (Summit Co) (fide TB) and 7/30 Wooster (Wayne Co) (JB).

Least Bittern

Numbers of this species are improving; Reports were statewide but most were western and northern areas.

Snowy Egret (D: inland only)

At least one pair nested on W. Sister Island (Lucas Co) and up to 13 individuals were observed in the Maumee Bay SP (Lucas Co) area during the summer.

Little Blue Heron

Up to 3 individuals were regular at Cedar Pt. division of Ottawa NWR (Lucas Co) and at least one pair nested on W. Sister Island.

Tricolored Heron (D)

Up to 2 individuals were observed at Cedar Pt. division off and on during the period. (m. obs.).

Cattle Egret

Normal numbers were observed in the western Lake Erie marshes and several nested on West Sister Island.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron

At least one pair nested in Dayton (Montgomery Co) and Columbus (Franklin Co) during the period; 6/1 Big Island WA (Marion Co) (KA); 7/18 Waterville (Lucas Co) (1 ad, 1 imm) (TB); 7/27 Magee Marsh (MS).

Mute Swan

One bird summered at Cleveland and possibly 2 birds summered at Magee Marsh (m. obs.).

Swow Goose

7/1 Killdeer Plains WA (KA).

Green-winged Teal

Becoming more common in the western Lake Erie marshes; A couple of birds summered at Cleveland (WNK, DC) and a pair nested at Barberton (Summit Co) (fide TB).

Northern Shoveler

6/2 and 7/21 Navarre Marsh (Ottawa Co) (MS); 6/8 Maumee Bay SP (KA); 7/6 Big Island WA (KA); 7/9 Columbus (KA).

Gadwall

Becoming more common in the western Lake Erie marshes; A pair summered and may have nested at Cleveland (DC, WNK).

American Wigeon

6/1 Big Island WA (KA); 6/6 Medusa Marsh (Erie Co) (AT); 6/9 Cedar Pt. division (2 to 4 individuals) (JKo, KA); 7/20 Magee Marsh (KA); 1 summered at Lake Rockwell (Portage Co) (fide TB); 1 to 4 individuals summered at Cleveland (WNK, DC).

Canvasback

One individual summered at Winous Pt. (Ottawa Co) (JP).

Redhead

Pairs were regular at Bayshore Power Plant (Lucas Co) (JP), Medusa Marsh (JP), and Magee Marsh (MS).

Ring-necked Duck

An individual summered at Cleveland (WNK, KA) and Castalia (Erie Co) (TB, JP).

Lesser Scaup

Birds summered at Bayshore Power Plant (MS, TB), Cleveland (WNK, DC), Barberton (fide TB), and Lorain (Lorain Co) (JP).

Hooded Merganser

Normal numbers from western Lake Erie marshes; Only inland record was 7/6 Big Island WA (KA).

Common Merganser

One summered at Sheldon's Marsh (Erie Co) (JP).

Red-breasted Merganser

1 to 3 summered at Cleveland (m. obs.) and up to 11 at Lorain (m. obs.).

Ruddy Duck

2 birds summered at Cleveland (m. obs.) and one at Barberton (fide TB). No records from western marshes!

Black Vultures (D: central and northern)

Normal reports from Clearcreek Valley (Fairfield Co) and Adams Co.

Osprey

6/16 Sandusky Bay (Erie Co) (TB); 6/20 Magee Marsh (JP).

Bald Eagle

5 young fledged from Ohio nests including one from Mosquito Creek nest (Trumbull Co) (MS). An immature (4 or 5 year old) summered near Waterville on the Maumee River (TB).

Northern Harrier

Birds were observed in Henry, Putnam, Summit, Wood, and Wyandot Cos. An individual was also observed in northeast Ohio near Southington (Trumbull Co) (fide TB) and a pair nested successfully near Bowling Green (Wood Co) (TB).

Sharp-shinned Hawk

A pair nested in Oak Openings Metro Park (Lucas Co) (MA) and were observed regularly at Findlay SP (Lorain Co) (JP); Also one was observed in Lorain 7/3 (AT).

Cooper's Hawk

Numerous reports statewide. It appears to be making a comeback.

Red-shouldered Hawk

Most reports from eastern and southern regions.

King Rail

Good numbers reported from western Lake Erie marshes. The only inland report was from Big Island WA 7/6 (KA).

Upland Sandpiper

This species appears to be on the comeback trail; Small colonies (12) were reported in Ashland, Clark, Henry, Holmes, Lorain, Montgomery, Ottawa, Wood, and Wyandot Cos.

Whimbrel

6/16 - 7/5 ONWR (Ottawa Co) (JP); possibly a late migrant.

Red Knot

6/20 - 7/1 Maumee Bay SP (JP); possibly a late migrant.

Common Snipe

8 reports all from northern Ohio but no nests reported. Unusual was one doing a courtship flight at Stillfork Swamp on 6/28 and 6/29 (TB) in Carroll Co.

Laughing Gull (D)

The bird at Bayshore Power Plant was back again this summer and appeared to be paired with a ring-billed Gull. This bird is thought by some to be a possible hybrid as it has some unusual plumage characteristics.

Little Gull

An immature bird was observed at Winous Pt. 7/5 (JP).

Bonaparte's Gull

Several summered at Lorain (TL).

Common Tern

No known nestings; However, one bird was observed defending territory at the Bayshore power plant during June (TB, MS) and up to 3 birds appeared to be on territory in the Maumee River near Waterville from 6/18 to 7/18 (TB).

Black Tern

Normal in western in Lake Erie marshes.

Common Barn-Owl

Birds nested successfully in Guernsey, Holmes, Ottawa, and Wayne Cos (MS, DK).

Long-eared Owl

A pair nested at Killdeer Plains WA (fide TB).

Short-eared Owl

A pair was regularly observed at Maumee Bay SP (JP).

Chuck-will's-widow (D: central and northern)

75 singing males were recorded for Adams Co 6/1 during an intense breeding bird survey by the Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas (TB). (See article in Vol. 8, No. 1).

Alder Flycatcher

Over forty individuals were reported, most from NE Ohio. One nested near Deshler in Henry Co. (TB).

Least Flycatcher

Numerous reports, all for northern Ohio and mostly northeastern Ohio.

Cliff Swallow

Colonies found in various areas of the state, mostly in the north and northeastern Ohio.

Black-capped Chickadee

On 5/19, a bird was found feeding 3 young at Stillfork Swamp by Dr. Eugene Good, Tom Bartlett, and Eric Liebold. This is most unusual for this area. On 6/4, Holmes Co. had their first county record (DK).

Red-breasted Nuthatch

May be more common in Ohio than thought, especially in the north-east. A pair nested successfully in the Oak Openings MP (TB).

Brown Creeper

A pair nested at the Germantown Reserve (Montgomery Co) (Judy Whitaker*). Other reports were 6/21 Burton (Geauga Co) (fide TB), 6/15-17 N. Chagrin (Cuyahoga Co) (TL), 7/4 Killbuck WA (Wayne Co) (JB), 7/6 Champion (Trumbull Co) (fide TB) and one that summered at Findlay SP (JP).

Bewick's Wren (D: central and northern)

An individual was found by Bob and Terry Thobaben in Adams Co on 6/1 and by KA on 6/14.

Sedge Wren

The only report: 6/25-26 Killbuck WA (JB).

Marsh Wren

Numerous reports but numbers appear to be declining.

Swainson's Thrush

One summered on the bird trail (Lucas Co) at Magee Marsh (JP).

Hermit Thrush

Only reports were from northeast Ohio and Mohican SF (Ashland Co).

Loggerhead Shrike

A pair nested successfully in Wood Co. (4 young) (TB) and one observed 6/9 in Ottawa Co (KA).

Bell's Vireo (D)

This species is very rare in Ohio and declining nationwide so documentation is essential. Only 3 of the following reports were documented. One reported summering at Blendon Woods (Franklin Co) (JF); one reported nesting on Wilson Road in Columbus (KA); 2 singing at Darby Creek MP (Franklin Co) 6/26 (KA); one at Buck Creek SP (Clark Co) on 7/20-21 (DO*, CM*); and one 7/23 in Stark Co (fide TB*).

Solitary Vireo

Summering birds at Findlay SP (JP), Lorain Co (JP), Oak Openings (TK, MA), Thompson (Geauga Co) (fide TB), Peninsula (Summit Co) (fide TB), Richfield (Summit Co) (fide TB), and 6/26 Maumee SF (Henry, Fulton, Lucas Co) (TK).

Golden-winged Warbler

6/1 Adams Co (TB); 6/8 Schwanberger Rd. (Lucas Co) (KA).

"Brewster's Warbler"

6/20 Chesterland (Geauga Co) (fide TB) and 6/13-7/31 in Maumee SF (TB).

Northern Parula

Numerous reports but most from the southern part of the state.

Chestnut-sided Warbler

Over 35 reports for northern Ohio and nestings in Geauga, Carroll, and Lucas Cos.

Magnolia Warbler

Nested in Lorain Co (JP) and 3 reports from northeast Ohio with one confirmed nesting (fide TB).

Black-throated Green Warbler

Numerous reports statewide; Probably more common than previously thought, especially in northern and northeast Ohio.

Blackburnian Warbler

6/1 to 6/21 Lake Rockwell (fide TB).

Blackpoll Warbler

One summered on the bird trail at Magee Marsh (JP).

Northern Waterthrush

6/7 Burton and 2 nested at Lake Rockwell (fide TB).

Mourning Warbler

6/10 to 6/26 Maumee SF (Henry Co) (TB); 6/16 Maumee SF (Lucas Co) (TK); 6/17 Perry (Lake Co) (fide TB).

Canada Warbler

6/13 Alyworth Creek (2) (fide TB).

Blue Grosbeak (D: central and northern)

At least 5 pairs were found in Adams Co and individuals in Coshocton Co; Unusual was a territorial male in Erie Co 6/16 to at least 7/7 (TB*, m. obs.*).

Dickcissel

Small colonies were found in Adams, Fairfield, Franklin, Henry, Lucas, Pike, Putnam, Seneca, and Wyandot Cos. This species should not be considered rare in western Ohio.

Bachman's Sparrow (D)

6/20 to 6/24 Darby Creek Metro Park (KA*).

Lark Sparrow

Birds nested in Fulton and Lucas Cos (TB) and individuals were reported for 7/11 Findlay SP (JP*) and 6/1 Adams Co (fide TB).

Henslow's Sparrow

Numerous in Adams Co (m. obs.) and 6 to 8 pairs in Holmes Co (DK); One was regular at Maumee Bay SP (JP).

Dark-eyed Junco

4 territorial birds near N. Chagrin (DC, TL) and 5 in Lake Co (fide TB).

White-throated Sparrow

6/14 Avon Lake (Lorain Co) (JP).

Western Meadowlark

Summering birds: 3 at Maumee Bay SP (m. obs.); 2 in Henry Co (TB); 1 near Vickery (Sandusky Co) (TB), and one at Killdeer Plains WA (KA). No reported nestings.

American Goldfinch

A late nesting at Springville Marsh SNP (Seneca Co) fledged 3 young on September 15. (TB).

Late Spring Migrants

1985

The following list is a record of those species that were observed during the breeding season but are thought to be late spring migrants. Unusual or significant records are noted at the end of the list and are underlined.

Common Loon

Black-bellied Plover

Semipalmated Plover

Killdeer

Greater Yellowlegs

Lesser Yellowlegs

Solitary Sandpiper

Marbled Godwit

Ruddy Turnstone

Sanderling

Semipalmated Sandpiper

Western Sandpiper

Least Sandpiper

White-rumped Sandpiper

Baird's Sandpiper

Pectoral Sandpiper

Dunlin

Stilt Sandpiper

Franklin's Gull

Little Gull

Bonaparte's Gull

Caspian Tern

Olive-sided Flycatcher

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher

Swainson's Thrush

Magnolia Warbler

Blackpoll Warbler

Northern Waterthrush

Mourning Warbler

Wilson's Warbler

Canada Warbler

Summer Tanager

Lincoln's Sparrow

White-throated Sparrow

Common Loon

6/9 Lake Pipin (Portage Co) (fide TB).

Marbled Godwit

6/12 ONWR (JP).

Western Sandpiper (D: spring only)

6/2 Barberton (3) (fide TB).

Baird's Sandpiper (D: spring only)

6/9 ONWR (10) (KA). Editor's Note: This species is very rare anywhere east of the Mississippi River in Spring migration and this number of individuals would be noteworthy at any time of the year. A specimen or photograph and documentation should accompany a report of this type.

Stilt Sandpiper

6/8 Spencer SWA (Medina Co) (fide TB).

Franklin Gull

6/6 Lorain (JP).

Little Gull (D: away from Lake Erie)

6/5 Lorain (second year bird) (DC).

Bonaparte's Gull

6/6 Cleveland (DC).

Northern Waterthrush

6/7 Sims Park (DC).

Summer Tanager

6/5 Magee Marsh (JP).

Early Fall Migrants

1985

The following list is a record of those species that were observed during the breeding season but are believed to be early southbound birds. Many are not unusual during this period. Unusual or significant records are underlined and further details are presented at the end of the list.

Greater Scaup

Lesser Scoup

Black-bellied Plover

Lesser Golden-Plover

Semipalmated Plover

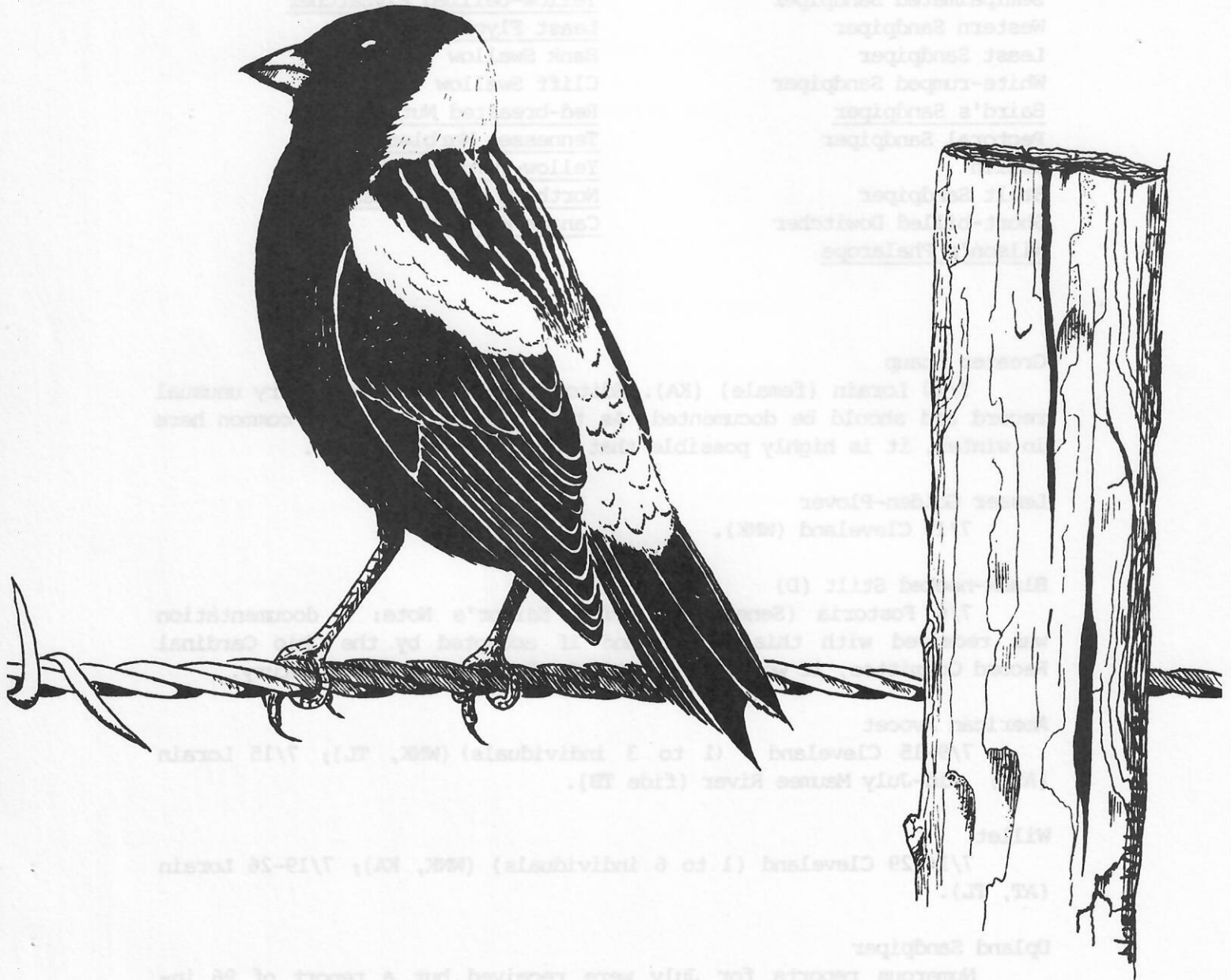
Killdeer

Black-necked Stilt

American Avocet

Greater Yellowlegs

Lesser Yellowlegs



Solitary Sandpiper
Willet
Upland Sandpiper
Whimbrel
Marbled Godwit
Ruddy Turnstone
Red Knot
Sanderling
Semipalmated Sandpiper
Western Sandpiper
Least Sandpiper
White-rumped Sandpiper
Baird's Sandpiper
Pectoral Sandpiper
Dunlin
Stilt Sandpiper
Short-billed Dowitcher
Wilson's Phalarope

Red-necked Phalarope
Franklin's Gull
Bonaparte's Gull
Great Black-backed Gull
Caspian Tern
Common Tern
Forster's Tern
Olive-sided Flycatcher
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
Least Flycatcher
Bank Swallow
Cliff Swallow
Red-breasted Nuthatch
Tennessee Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Northern Waterthrush
Canada Warbler

Greater Scaup

7/20 Lorain (female) (KA). Editor's Note: This is a very unusual record and should be documented. As this species is fairly common here in winter, it is highly possible that some summer here also.

Lesser Golden-Plover

7/19 Cleveland (WNK).

Black-necked Stilt (D)

7/6 Fostoria (Seneca Co) (AC*) Editor's Note: A documentation was received with this report and if accepted by the Ohio Cardinal Record Committee, it would be one of the few records this century.

American Avocet

7/9-15 Cleveland (1 to 3 individuals) (WNK, TL); 7/15 Lorain (AT); mid-July Maumee River (fide TB).

Willet

7/14-29 Cleveland (1 to 6 individuals) (WNK, KA); 7/19-26 Lorain (AT, TL).

Upland Sandpiper

Numerous reports for July were received but a report of 96 individuals near ONWR on 7/25 by JP is noteworthy. Making a comeback?

Whimbrel

7/6 Cleveland (2) (WNK); 7/17 Cleveland (3) (WNK); 7/27 Cleveland (WNK, TL).

Marbled Godwit

7/14 Magee Marsh (2) (JP).

Baird's Sandpiper (D: spring only)

7/12, 7/24 Columbus (1-3) (KA); 7/21 Fostoria (AC); 7/22 Spencer Lake (AT).

Wilson's Phalarope

7/2-30 Cleveland (TL, WNK); 7/6-29 Columbus (KA); 7/26 Barberton (fide TB); 7/31 Spencer Lake (AT).

Red-necked Phalarope

7/28-29 Columbus (KA).

Franklin's Gull

7/29 Lorain (TL), 7/30 Magee Marsh (JP).

Great Black-backed Gull (D: away from Lake Erie)

7/19 Cleveland (WNK); 7/22 Vermilion (Erie Co) (3 immatures) (AT).

Olive-sided Flycatcher

7/25 Magee Marsh (JP).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher

7/25 Magee Marsh (JP); 7/31 Spencer Lake (AT).

Least Flycatcher

7/21 Navarre Marsh (MS); 7/25 Magee Marsh (JP).

Red-breasted Nuthatch

There were several statewide reports in the second half of July; Were these early migrants or summering (breeding?) birds?

Tennessee Warbler

7/31 Sims Park (DC).

Yellow-rumped Warbler

7/17 Perry (fide TB); This report was of a first year bird. Was it an early migrant or young of a local nest?

Northern Waterthrush

7/25 Magee Marsh (JP).

Canada Warbler

7/17 Magee Marsh (JP).

Bird Report Contributors Cross-Reference

Thanks to the reporters who so unselfishly share with all of us their observations and thereby make this magazine possible. The names of those reporters with multiple observations appear at the end of this report while those with individual contributions appear in the body of the report.

J. Kirk Alexander (KA)	Joe Komorowski (JKo)
Matt Anderson (MA)	Tom Lepage (TL)
Tom Bartlett (TB)	Charlotte Mathena (CM)
James Bruce (JB)	Doug Overacker (DO)
A. H. Claugus (AC)	John Pogacnik (JP)
Dave Corbin (DC)	Mark Shieldcastle (MS)
Paula Jack (PJ)	Arden & Erdine Thompson (AT)
Tom Kemp (TK)	
Dennis Kline (DK)	

Location Cross-Reference

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>COUNTY</u>
Avon Lake	Lorain	Maumee SF	Henry-
Barberton (PPG set- tling pond)	Summit		Fulton-
Bayshore (power plant)	Lucas	Medusa Marsh	Lucas
Bayview	Erie	Mohican SF	Erie
Big Island State WA	Marion	Mosquito Creek Reser- voir	Ashland
Blendon Woods MP	Franklin	Navarre Marsh	Trumbull
Bowling Green	Wood	North Chagrin Reser- vation	Ottawa
Buck Creek SP	Clark	Oak Openings MP	Cuyahoga
Burton	Geauga	Ottawa National Wild- life Refuge (OWNR)	Lucas
Castalia Pond	Erie	Pennisula	Ottawa-
Cedar Point divi- sion ONWR	Lucas	Perry	Lucas
Champion	Trumbull	Richfield	Summit
Chesterland	Geauga	Sandusky Bay	Lake
Clearcreek	Fairfield		Summit
Cleveland	Cuyahoga	Schwamberger Road	Ottawa-
Darby Creek MP	Franklin	Sheldon's Marsh	Erie
Dayton	Montgomery	Southington	Trumbull
Findlay SP	Lorain	Spencer State WA	Medina
Fostoria	Seneca	Springville Marsh SNP	Seneca
Germantown Reserve	Montgomery	Stillfork Swamp	Carroll
Killbuck State WA	Wayne	Thompson	Geauga
Killdeer Plains State WA	Wyandot	Vermilion	Erie
Lake Pipin	Portage	Vickery	Sandusky
Lake Rockwell	Portage	Waterville	Lucas
Lorain	Lorain	West Sister Island	Lucas
Magee Marsh State WA	Ottawa	Winous Point	Ottawa
Maumee Bay SP	Lucas	Wooster	Wayne

Scoters and Their Occurrence in Ohio

Larry Rosche

Scoters are seabirds which are infrequently encountered along Lake Erie and less so inland. It is felt that any scoter encountered in Ohio deserves a thorough look. Males can be identified at greater distances due to distinct head and wing differences. Due to visibility of white in the wing, identification of the white-winged scoter is attainable in flight even at a seemingly great distance. Because the adult males are not likely to be confused, female and immature plumages will be emphasized. An attempt will also be made to present a picture as to the season in which each species is to be expected.

At Rest: Males are fairly rare and in fall migration nearly every bird is in immature or female plumage. Males should present the fewest problems of identification; the exception being the possible confusion of a first summer white-winged scoter with that of an adult black scoter. Immature white-wingeds will appear all black at a distance and effort should be taken to locate wing patches and note the bill size. Seasoned observers have been observed calling a female black scoter a ruddy duck on more than one occasion. Black scoters are the smallest of the scoters but not even close to the size of a ruddy duck. The prominent white cheek patch of a resting ruddy duck contrasts sharply with the black crown areas. The crown in turn contrasts with grey nape and upper parts of the winter plumaged ruddy duck. Although some female black scoters have distinct white cheek patches they are not as white as a ruddy duck. The cheek of the black scoter contrasts with the crown but the crown is uniform in color with the rest of the upperparts. The cheek of the black scoter female easily separates it from surf and white-winged scoters. At rest, surf and white-winged scoters are very similar in shape. Unless the white wing patch is visible or the two are side by side the difference in size is of little consequence. The head shapes are fairly similar with the white-winged having a more abrupt forehead. It seems like the bill of the surf scoter protrudes from the top of the head but at a distance this is of little use. Identifications based on intensity of facial spots is touchy at best. The surf is more likely to have distinct spotting but several white-wingeds have been observed to have very noticeable spots in front of and behind the eye. This is particularly true for immature white-wingeds. The character found most useful (after my observations) is the cap of a surf scoter. The black crown contrasts very sharply with the brownish areas of the face. This has been noticed in breeding plumage females as well. These areas do not contrast in the white-winged scoter, although they may seem obscure to the novice; a veteran observer will understand their meaning.

In Flight: Once again the adult male plumage is striking and identification is usually not the problem. The only immature scoter that can be relatively easy to identify at a distance, in flight, is

the white-winged. The cheek patch of the black scoter is visible at a good distance and a few observers can identify them correctly on this feature. However, the contrasting cap to face feature of the surf scoter can cause misidentification. Identifying these two in flight is difficult especially at great distances. Field guides mention the two-toned effect of the dark wing linings to the silvery flight feathers of the black scoter as a means of identification. This is useful in adult males but since the majority of Ohio scoters are immatures this will probably be of minimal help. It is hard to imagine that all lines of scoters flying by one's favorite Lake Erie observation point can be correctly identified to species. Unless they are observed at a relatively close distance it is felt they should be reported as scoter species. This may cause some observers to scoff but even the best of them misidentify scoters at not so great distances. Reporting should be one hundred percent accurate, not fifty-fifty.

Occurrence: Probably the only definite conclusion one might make of scoter occurrence in Ohio is that the white-winged is the most likely to be encountered. Autumn migration provides the state with the most reports. Of these, the south shore of Lake Erie provides the lion's share. Although rare, it is possible to see all three species of scoter in a single outing along Lake Erie. It would be exceedingly rare to observe all three species at an inland location. Scoters start to arrive with the other divers in October and can linger into December and rarely January except for the white-winged. Numbers can vary from year to year with flocks of 40+ black scoters flying single file just above Lake Erie not surprisingly. Surf scoters are usually found in smaller groups. Recent reports indicate that they are more widespread than black scoters but historically this has not always been true. White-winged scoters are encountered at about the same time as the other scoters and not likely to be found in flocks of ten or more. There are days, usually in mid-November, when one may encounter any of the three species in good numbers along Lake Erie. This is a matter of being in the right place at the right time. In winter white-wingeds are the most likely to remain in the open water areas. Notes should be taken on possible black and surf scoters regardless of where they are encountered at this season. It is not implied that they need a great deal of documentation, but demand a thorough observation. In spring one will find scoters to be late migrants. White-wingeds still constitute the majority of scoter reports in this period. White-wingeds are encountered earlier in spring (due possibly to the numbers that winter on Lake Ontario) but can be expected into May. Scoters are rare inland at any season but may occur inland as well as along Lake Erie at this time. All indications point to the fact that black and surf scoters migrate in April through early May. In summer scoters are casual at best. All reports at this time should be documented thoroughly.

WEST SISTER ISLAND
Home of the Herons
Revisited

Ed Pierce

I first visited West Sister Island in 1982. The results of those two trips, June 26 and July 2, are reported in the Ohio Cardinal Vol. 5, No. 2 and Vol. 4, No. 2 (joint issue) pgs. 1-11.

On those occasions I made a survey of the Island, counted black-crowned night-heron nests and discovered nesting cattle egrets. I had hoped to find a snowy egret colony as there had been a large increase in these birds in the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge and Magee Marsh Wildlife Area complex the last two summers (nine in 1981 and seventeen in 1982). However, none were found nor any evidence of any nesting ibis, little blue heron or tri-colored heron. I speculated in that previous article that perhaps I visited the Island too late in the season and that the end of April would be a better time to find these species as the adults would then be incubating. Revisiting the Island in 1983 proved this to be incorrect.

I made three trips in 1983: May 12, June 11 and June 25. I was surprised by the lack of tree leaves on May 12. The mainland trees were in leaf but at West Sister no tree bore anything but buds although the vines and ground cover were in leaf. Perhaps the colder lake temperatures retarded the tree leaf growth.

The black-crowned night-heron nests contained eggs and newly hatched young. I didn't inspect many nests as this required climbing but I did photograph one nest with four eggs and a second nest with three downy young which I aged at less than five days old (McVaugh, 1973). This wasn't surprising as the black-crowned "calendar of life history events" (see Appendix A) establishes May 10 as the average day of first hatching in the Toledo area. Many adult birds were seen sitting in the smaller hackberry trees containing the nests. Among them were at least six adult cattle egrets in breeding plumage and several adult great egrets. The only other heron or egret species seen on this trip was the expected, great blue heron. Adults of this species were either standing near their nests in the tops of the taller hackberry trees on the northeast third of the Island or flying in groups to and from the Island.

Later I would learn that some of the species I was seeking (snowy egret and little blue heron) incubated later than May 12. A surprise since data from the nearest latitude nesting site, Islajo Island (near Atlantic City) New Jersey, reported (Burger, 1978) that these species started incubation between May 6 - 10, in that area. (I assumed that the farther the distance from the equator the later incubation began, but data of this type is infrequently reported and this is the nearest reported source I could find.)

Incubation is important to locating and identifying nests as the nests and eggs of these species including black-crowned night-heron and great egret are very similar if not indistinguishable in some cases (Harrison, 1975). So it is necessary to see the adult actually sitting on the nest. The only other reliable method of identification I know is to see the young but with some three thousand nests on the Island you first have to locate the nest.

The lack of foliage on May 12 presented the additional problem of increasing the flush distance of those black-crowned night-herons that were incubating. It also prevented the birds early return to the nest by revealing the intruder. Later, (June 11), we would be able to get close enough to the incubating bird to locate the nest with certainty and also conceal ourselves to watch the bird return to the nest.

Unknown to me at the time, Jane Brim and others from the Ohio Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit of Ohio State University had made a nest survey of the Island on May 5 and 6 of this year. Later (June 25), I would meet Jane as we both returned to the Island in the same boat.

The lack of foliage was perfect for this project (Brim, 1983). Unobstructed viewing of the nests was important. Their nest totals per species are included in Table I. Actually, they were testing the use of three different nest survey methods. Their totals are a summation of the totals from these three methods (each method was used in a separate area on the Island) plus an estimate of additional great blue heron and great egret nests in unsurveyed areas (based on the number of birds flushing in front of an observer in that area). Their totals do include the entire island.

At least three problems attend using nest counts to extrapolate the number of breeding birds present: (1) determining if the nest is occupied (or is it an unused nest from the prior year); (2) identifying the nest as to species in a mixed colony (the more visible the nest, the greater the flush distance); (3) accounting for those nests constructed after the count day (colony wading birds may nest over a period of time, apparently to avoid total young destruction by a single catastrophe [Weber, 1975] and some species construct nests for second broods).

The only solution I know is to count at a time when downy young are most likely (solves identification), number tag each nest and note its contents (provides history of nest from year to year) and check for newly built nests each week thereafter until none are likely, discounting those built for second broods if any.

Migratory passerines do apparently use the Island. Several warbler species were seen May 12 in the smaller hackberrys around the lighthouse (actually viewed from above by being at the top of lighthouse looking

down). A whip-poor-will was seen on May 12, a singing male black-throated blue warbler on June 25 and two Carolina wrens on May 12 and June 25.

The trip June 11 produced some of the nests I sought. By this time the foliage canopy of the smaller hackberries was closed. I accompanied Mark Shieldcastle, Wildlife Biologist, State of Ohio, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife, to the Island at his invitation. His crew was banding up to 100 immature black-crowned night-herons per season to study their fall dispersal patterns. As a project volunteer, I helped capture birds for banding. Later, I walked alone to the area of the 1982 nesting cattle egrets. It was there sitting on branches above the canopy that I saw a single adult little blue heron. I called Mark over but the bird had flown. As I was explaining to him what I had seen, an adult dropped through the foilage onto a nest within 30 feet of us. We watched and remained motionless as it worked down a limb to the nest containing an unknown number of eggs, inspected them and left. A second adult little blue heron attempted to return to a different nest in a different hackberry about 15 feet closer to us. It repeatedly returned to this twenty foot tree and sat in the small branches at its top. During this time Mark saw an adult cattle egret return to incubation on a nest approximately 180 feet to the east. Each of these nests was marked with a red streamer for future location. But our time had expired and we had to leave the Island without further searching.

Analysis of the data found from these nests on our final return to the Island on June 25 (see Appendix B) established that the little blue heron nests were probably completed around May 26 to June 1 when incubation began (incubation is used here as the time interval from the laying of one egg to the hatching of that egg) and ended with the first downy young about June 18 to June 24. Previous trips in early May, late June, early July or even late April as suggested had or would have missed the incubation period: the only real chance of finding two nests out of three thousand. The New Jersey data for this species placed these dates eight days to two weeks earlier than found (Burger, 1978).

After the June 25 trip we would find that all the small egrets and herons in question started incubation between May 26 and June 3 except for one snowy egret pair which started May 16 (see Appendix B). I calculated that this snowy egret had started nest building around May 11 and completed incubation around June 7. Whether the snowy egret nests earlier on the average than these other species awaits more data. However these snowy egret dates are dependent upon my aging the oldest young correctly at 18 days.

The June 25 trip included Mark, Jane and William Botsford, Outdoor Recreation Planner and Volunteer Coordinator for the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, among others. A step ladder proved helpful in observing and photographing nest contents. The understory was now five to six feet high at points. The remaining number needed of black-crowned night-heron

juvenals were banded. We did find at least one nest of this species with downy young about ten days old. This means that these eggs were first laid around May 22, about three weeks later than the downy young and eggs observed on May 12.

We then found and photographed the marked cattle egret nest. It was in a twenty foot hackberry tree. The nest was 2.25 meters (7'6") from the ground and contained four young which I aged at 5 - 7 days old. Seventy-five feet south, a second nest was discovered in an 18 foot hackberry 2.5 m (7'2") above the ground. It contained two young and three eggs. I aged the oldest young at two days. I also photographed this nest. A third nest was found about ten feet south of this second nest. It was 2.75 m (9'2") above the ground in a twenty foot hackberry tree and contained one downy young. I did not photograph or age this bird although Jane Brim states it was less than one week old (Brim, 1983). Since I was busy photographing and measuring these nests and those of the subsequent species found, I did not make a thorough search of each nest in the vicinity of these nests. Thus, I do not know the total number of cattle egrets nesting on West Sister in 1983. However, the nests found were more greatly distanced from each other than those nests in 1982. In 1982 all were within one group of trees (chokecherry) and in closer proximity to each other than the black-crowned night-heron nests.

Little Blue Heron

Quickly the marked little blue heron nest was located and photographed (see cover of this issue). This nest was about 180 feet northwest from the third cattle egret nest. It was 3.1 m (10'4") above the ground in a twenty foot hackberry and contained three young ranging in age from six to eight days (McVaugh, 1973, A). They did not move from the nest when approached or handled. I aged these birds due to this behavior and the juvenal feathers just emerging on the crown. This was the nest to which the adult returned on June 11.

Identification can be accurate even at this age. Black-crowned night-heron and tri-colored heron young at this age are "dark" plumaged whereas the little blue heron is "light" plumaged (McVaugh, 1973, A, B, D). The great egret is yellow-billed with a dark gray streak extending from under the eye to one half the length of the bill whereas the little blue heron bill is bluish-pink fading to blue-black distally and does not have the dark gray streak (McVaugh, 1973, C, D). The snowy egret yellow-billed bird has a yellow bill with a black tip and the black-billed bird has a solid black bill and both varieties have tarsi which are darker (grayish-green) than the toes (pale green) whereas the little blue heron bill is as described above and its tarsus and toes are the same color (medium gray-blue with pink cast) (McVaugh, 1973 D, 1975). The cattle egret at this age is black-billed with a yellow tip (starts to darken from horn or green to black at 5 days) with a distinctive jowl and stoutish bill

and prominent pale yellow iris with small dark pupil whereas the little blue heron bill is as described above and is without the distinctive jowl and is less stout and more pointed and its iris is pale gray and small with a large dark pupil (McVaugh, 1973 D; Weber, 1975; Blaker, 1969).

A second nest of this species was located within fifteen feet of the first. This was the nest where the adult repeatedly returned to the top of the tree on June 11. This nest was also in a twenty-foot hackberry 2.925 m (9'9") from the ground and contained two downy young and three eggs. These young were about two days old. I photographed this nest and contents. I don't have photos of one-day old great egrets or snowy egrets nor did I examine, in hand, the birds in this nest. I eliminate these other "white" herons by the presence of the adult on June 11 plus the photographs I took which are consistent with the description and drawings for this species (McVaugh, 1973, D).

Snowy Egret

While photographing these nests, someone called that they had found snowy egret young. I arrived to find four snowy egret young standing among the branches of a multiple stem chokecherry tree. Human presence had apparently flushed these four young into the branches above the nest before I arrived. I did not see these birds occupying this nest. The nest was 2.925 m (9'9") above the ground. I photographed one of the young from this group as it was being banded. I aged this bird at about eighteen days maximum (McVaugh, 1975). Since eggs of this species are laid every two days approximately and hatch over an average period of three days (Jenni, 1969), these four young could vary as much as three days in age from each other. In approximately ten days the horny indicated scales of the tarsi of this species begin to darken and at the age of 13 days, the tarsi are definitely darker than the toes. At 13 days the head and body are covered with white down while at 18 days white juvenal feathers cover the body, wings and tail and are emerging on the head and neck (McVaugh, 1975).

Surprising to me was the later acquired knowledge that snowy egret young can be either yellow-billed or black-billed. The young are born with a gray or pinkish-gray bill and acquire a "dark" or "light" bill in three to four days. At six or seven days of age, the bill is either completely black or yellow with a black tip. The only information I have on how long the bill remains yellow is "nestling period" which means to McVaugh at least 34 days (McVaugh, 1975). These birds at West Sister were yellow-billed. The only change in the comparative anatomical descriptions give above under little blue heron is due to the increased age of the young found here. At about 18 days of age the little blue heron's bill is yellow with a black tip, however, its tarsus and toes are light green-gray and darker on the toes whereas the snowy egret yellow-billed young (also black-billed) has tarsi (grayish-green) darker than toes (pale green) (McVaugh, 1973 D; 1975).

I was told that the second nest I saw in a nearby chokecherry contained two downy snowy egret young. This nest was 3.1 m (10'4") above the ground. In the excitement I never looked at nor photographed the contents of this nest. If this second nest is accurately identified, then a wide disparity in the start of incubation for this species on the Island exists. The nest with the 18-day old young began incubation around May 17 by my calculations whereas the downy young nest began around June 2. This June 2 date coincides well with the incubation period for cattle egret and little blue heron. However, there is no denying the existence of the older young. They could mean that the snowy egret begins nesting about two weeks earlier than these other species. More data is needed.

Both of these nests were within 100 feet of the little blue heron and cattle egret nests. Strangely, these nests were apparently in the same group of chokecherry trees where I found the cattle egret nests in 1982 according to my 1982 marks on these trees.

In conclusion, I had found the nests I was seeking. They had brought me a great deal of new information on what may be the northern-most mixed wading bird colony in the eastern United States. It also caused me to learn and synthesize a great deal of information on the species involved. Information on the breeding biology of these birds (see Appendix A) is sparse, incomplete and not readily available in one source as you might expect. Jenni (1969) is the best source but no one has determined the time period required between the onset of breeding and the beginning of nest building for these birds. I have used three days as an estimate since the great egret requires at least two days (Wiese, 1976). Information on identification of the young is available in McVaugh (1973, 1975), but other than cattle egrets it is the only source.

Only the tri-colored heron nest (assuming it even has) remains unlocated. Parris (1979) had seen a pair present on West Sister. That was in 1978. Not again until the summer of 1985 have more than one tri-colored heron been seen in the marsh complex.

Further study of the colony is imperative. Questions to answer: Do these night-heron nests survive the winter? Are they re-used or re-built? Do these night-herons have second broods? Do these snowy egrets lay eggs earlier than the other small egrets and herons? Finally, how many birds of each species really do nest on the Island?

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Second little blue heron nest found on West Sister Island June 25, 1983 photographed by Ed Pierce.

Table I

Nest Counts at W. Sister Island

	<u>Great Blue Heron</u>	<u>Great Egret</u>	<u>Black-crowned Night Heron</u>
1959 (A)			1,200
1972 (B)	Total nests for all three species: 3,000		
1976 (C)	1,600	200	3,000
1976 (D)	600	600	3,000
1977 (E)	1,158	100	600-1,000
1978 (E)	1,167	100	600-1,000
1979 (F)	950	50	1,000
1982 (G)			1,300
1983 (H)	1,013	543	1,011

- (A) Van Camp (Campbell, 1968), a "careful count" based on actual presence on Island.
- (B) Hoffman (Hoffman, 1974), estimate based on author's presence on Island in July. Not an actual nest count.
- (C) Scharf (Scharf, 1978), method unknown.
- (D) Campbell (Lafferty, 1979) and Toledo Naturalist's Association estimated these numbers of nests based on their presence on Island.
- (E) Parris (Parris, 1979), estimate based on actual nest count from ground for great blue heron and great egret and by "visual estimate" of number of pairs or nests for black-crowned night heron. "Visual estimate" method unknown and no details given.
- (F) Meeks and Hoffman (Meeks, 1979), as number of nests in June, method unknown and no other details given.
- (G) Pierce (Pierce, 1982), as a direct count of nests on July 2.
- (H) Brim (Brim, 1983), as the sum of three different survey methods (each in a different area) plus an estimate for unsurveyed areas on Island on May 5 and 6.

Appendix A

Breeding biology of West Sister birds

Breeding Activity	Interval in days consumed by activity per species				
	BC Night heron	Great egret	Cattle egret	Little blue heron	Snowy egret
Attainment of red legs	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pairing completion	16	3 ⁽¹⁾	3	3	3
Copulation	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
First egg laid after copulation	3.3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
First egg laid after pairing completion	N/A	4-7 ⁽²⁾	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nest construction prior to first egg	N/A	N/A	6.6±0.37	4.8±.41	4.4±.25
Incubation	24	25-26 ⁽³⁾	22.9±.04	22.8±.17	22.4±.12
Total to hatch of first egg	46.3	32-36	32.5±.41	30.6±.58	29.8±.37
Total additional days to hatch complete clutch			4.7±.29	3.2±.26	3.2±.13

(1) Wiese, 1976; (2) Mock, 1980; (3) Cramp, 1977.

Notes:

1. The data for cattle egret, little blue heron and snowy egret is from Jenni (1969) except for the number of days for pairing completion which is a guess based on the interval for great egret.

2. The data for black-crowned night-heron is from Allen (1940).

3. Incubation is the period for one egg to hatch. In the above birds it generally begins with or after the first egg. In the snowy egret and

Appendix A

continued

little blue heron it began the day the second egg was laid in fifty percent of the nests (Jenni, 1969). The great egret can delay until the third egg (Cramp, 1977).

4. Jenni (1969) found that most nest construction in the cattle egret, little blue heron or snowy egret followed pair formation whereas Allen (1940) did not regard nest construction in the black-crowned night-heron as a separate step in the reproductive cycle and Mock (1980) included nest building as one of four activities of the great egret in the 4-7 day stage referred to as a trial pair bond period.



Snowy egret young found on West Sister Island June 25, 1983 and photographed by Ed Pierce.

Appendix B

Calendar dates for reproduction stages of
West Sister birds

Activity	BCNH	Great egret	Cattle egret	Little blue heron	Snowy egret
Average observed arrival	3/25	4/1	4/16	5/6 (5/9 median)	4/30
Observed arrival 1982	3/28	3/18	4/14	5/1	5/1
Observed arrival 1983	-	-	4/16	4/20	4/27
Onset of breeding	3/26; 5/1	4/25	5/16;5/23	5/18;5/23	5/8;5/26
Start nest building	4/11; 5/17	4/25	5/19;5/26	5/21;5/27	5/11;5/29
Start Incubation	4/16; 5/22	5/2	5/26;6/2	5/26;6/1	5/16;6/3
End Incubation	5/10; 6/15	5/28	6/18;6/25	6/18;6/24	6/7;6/25

Notes:

1. This chart gives ranges of dates for all but great egret which has not been studied with the same intensity.

2. The above dates are determined by first observing the nest and aging the young. Once a date of hatch for the first egg (oldest bird) is determined, use the intervals in Appendix A to determine the remaining retrospective dates.

3. The average observed arrival dates for cattle egret, little blue heron and snowy egret are calculated from observation dates submitted to The Ohio Cardinal. These dates for black-crowned night-heron and great egret are from Campbell (1968).

