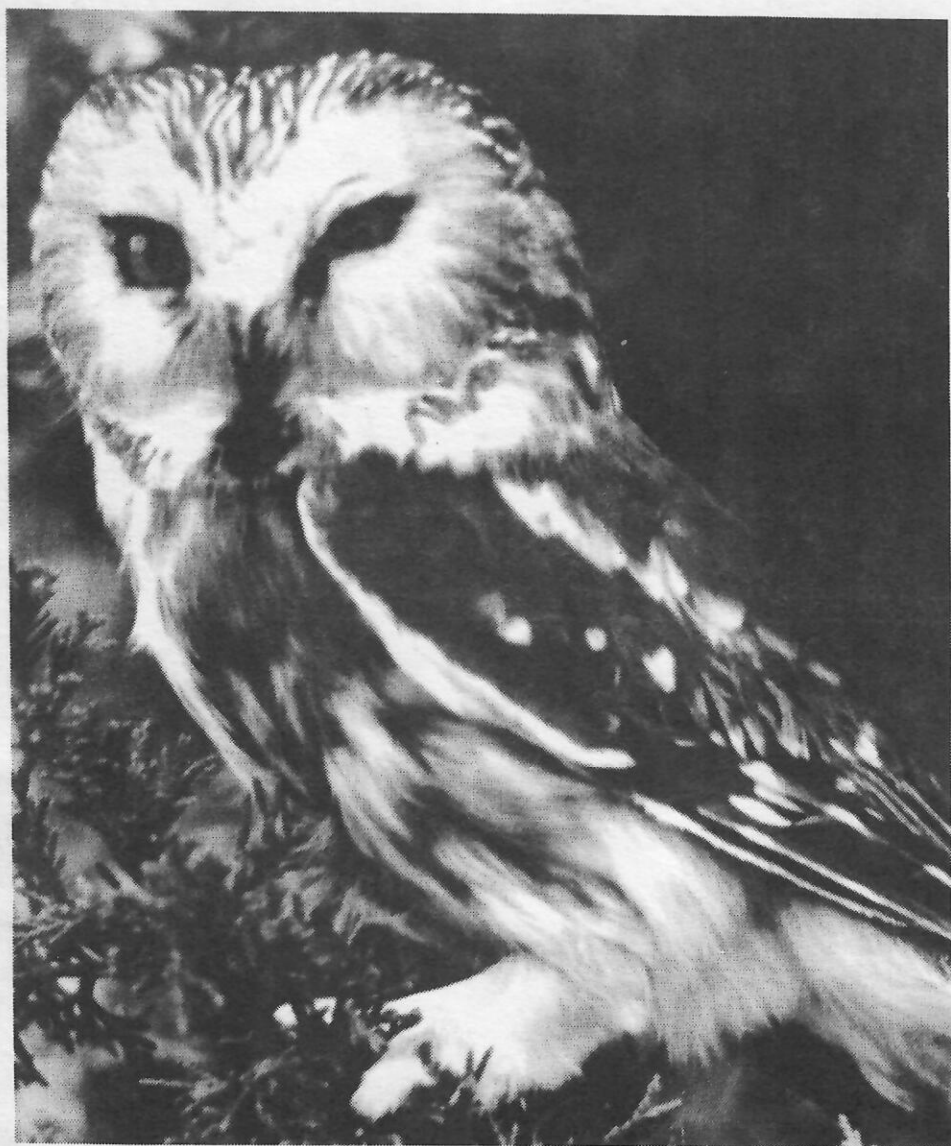


The

Ohio Cardinal

Volume 14, Number 2 May 1991 (Winter 1990-1991)



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The purpose of the *Ohio Cardinal* is to provide a permanent record of the abundance and distribution of birds in Ohio; to help document the occurrence of rare species within 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 are welcome from any area in the state. They should be sent to: Robert Harlan, 7072 Parma Park Blvd., Parma Heights, Ohio

Winter, March 10

Spring, June 10

Summer, August 10

Autumn, December 10

Report forms are not a necessity but will be supplied on request. Unusual species should be documented; documentation forms are available from the editors.

The Ohio Cardinal Staff:

Thomas Kemp, Co-Editor

Edwin C. Pierce, Co-Editor

Matthew Anderson, Seasonal Editor

Peter Montion, Publications

Cover: Northern Saw-whet Owl, Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area. *Photograph by Kim Stahler.*

The Winter Season, 1990-1991

Matt Anderson and Tom Kemp

MILD is the word that best describes the recently passed winter season in Ohio. Above average temperatures and below average snowfall were the norms around the state. December in particular was a wet month, but the mild temperatures resulted in most precipitation during that month arriving in the form of rain. Open water was plentiful well into the winter.

All of these ingredients added up to conditions that were just right to hold lingering species well beyond normal departure dates. And that's exactly what happened. Numerous species that are generally far south of Ohio by late fall or earlier were able to survive through December and in some cases even well into January. Species which fell into this category during the 1990-91 winter season included Green-backed heron, Virginia rail, Common moorhen, Least sandpiper, Dunlin, Tree swallow, Marsh wren, Gray catbird, American pipit, Yellow-throated warbler, Ovenbird, Common yellowthroat, Lincoln's sparrow, and Northern oriole.

One of the highlights of the season was the impressive showing of birds of prey at Killdeer Plains. Those birding the area in January and February were able to find Northern harriers, Rough-legged hawks, and Long-eared, Short-eared, and Northern Saw-whet owls in good numbers. Additionally, a pair of nesting Bald eagles and a sighting of Merlin added to the excitement.

Note that the following summary,

with few exceptions, excludes records from Christmas bird counts. Unfortunately, the Christmas count results were not ready at press time.

Red-throated loons were found at both Caesar Creek Lake and Killdeer Plains during January. There were about a dozen reports of Common loons, some of them remaining into January. Red-necked grebes were discovered in early December at Cowan Lake and Bresler Reservoir as were two Eared grebes at Headlands Beach State Park. Seven Double-crested cormorants on February 12 in Cleveland were noteworthy. A **Trumpeter swan** was documented by birders at ONWR in mid-January. Its origins are unknown, but it is possible that the bird wandered from one of the flocks recently released in the upper midwest or Canada. A Greater White-fronted goose at Spring Valley on February 24 was a surprising find. Puddle duck reports were generally not very noteworthy, exceptions being a late Blue-winged teal at Gilmore Ponds on December 11 and a Eurasian wigeon reported at Rocky River January 2.

Canvasbacks peaked in mid-January with 10,000 estimated at Bayshore Power Plant. A **Harlequin duck** spent most of January and February on the Cleveland lakefront. A half dozen Oldsquaw reports were submitted and all scoter species were found. Rocky River hosted

all three of the scoters in early January. Three thousand plus Common goldeneyes at Cedar Point NWR on February was an unusually large concentration.

Black vultures were noted in Ross and Athens Counties during February while single Turkey vultures were also reported from Ross County in early February and two other locales in late January. Ohio's newest inland nesting Bald eagles can now be found at Killdeer Plains. Northern goshawk reports came from Cincinnati where one spent the day at the zoo on January 16 and from Seneca County January 27 - February 10. Rough-legged hawks were generally uncommon, but as many as 14 were found at Killdeer Plains and 8 in Ashland County. Merlins were reported from five sites and Peregrine falcons from Toledo and Cleveland.

A Virginia rail at Springville Marsh was unexpected, but even more so was the Common moorhen that visited Gilmore Ponds through January 21. One hundred twenty-five Sandhill cranes were seen in Wyoming on December 14. **Least sandpipers** took advantage of the mild conditions and lingered into January at C. J. Brown Reservoir. Likewise, Dunlins also spent part of January at C. J. Brown. Two Purple sandpipers at Headlands Beach SP on December 2 and another (?) there on January 1 were good finds. The most unusual gull reports were of a Franklin's gull at Springfield Lake on December 24 and a Black-legged kittiwake at Eastlake December 1 and at Lorain during January.

The only Snowy owl report came from Burke Airport. Long-eared, Short-eared, and Northern Saw-whet owls were each reported from five locations. The most productive site for these owls was certainly Killdeer Plains. See this issue for an account of the wintering raptors at Killdeer Plains. Eastern phoebes remained well into December in at least a couple of sites in southeast Ohio. A lone Tree swallow at Beaver Creek Reservoir on December 1 was unusually late.

Red-breasted nuthatches were scarce after last winter's major invasion. A Marsh wren remained at Buck Creek State Park through at least January 13, and Gray catbirds were found in Meigs and Holmes Counties. American pipits apparently overwintered in as many as three different sites. Northern shrikes again staged a good movement into the state with no fewer than 14 reports. A Loggerhead shrike observed at Gilmore Ponds is an excellent winter find. Ohio's second ever overwintering **Yellow-throated warbler** subsisted on suet and peanut butter at a feeder and insects on the underside of eaves at a farm in Holmes County. Two Pine warblers spent the winter at a feeder in Toledo, and an **Ovenbird** was described from the Mansfield Christmas bird count.

A Vesper sparrow on January 26 in Pickaway County and Savannah sparrows at two sites in December and January were unusual winter records. A Sharp-tailed sparrow report from Gordon Park December 10 and a report of a Lincoln's sparrow

spending the winter at a feeder in Lorain County were not accompanied by details. A group of at least 20 Brewer's blackbirds in Pickaway County on January 26 was noteworthy. An immature male **Northern "Bullock's" oriole** was reported from the backyard of an Akron residence in December. There is a previous record of a bird of this race overwintering during two consecutive years in Columbus in 1974-75 and 1975-76. As a rule winter finches were scarce or absent from most of the state. Notable exceptions include Mohican State Park and a feeder in Hocking County where maxima of 127 and 146 Evening grosbeaks were observed.

In the following species accounts, underlined species are considered unusual and an asterisk means documentation was submitted and accepted by the Records Committee. Commonly used abbreviations include ONWR (Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge), CPNWRC (Cedar Point National Wildlife Refuge Count), GLSM (Grand Lake St. Mary's), CVNRA (Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area), and HBSP (Headlands Beach State Park). The CPNWR and ONWR monthly counts are compiled by Joe Komorowski and Ed Pierce, respectively.

Loons through Puddle

Ducks

RED-THROATED LOON: 6-19 Jan. Caesar Creek Lk. (DD, CS, DG)*, 13 Jan. Killdeer Plains (LR, m.ob.). COMMON LOON: 4 Jan. Cleveland (TL), 13 Jan. Buck Creek SP (DO), 9+ additional reports. PIED-BILLED GREBE: 2 Dec.

ONWRC (15), 9 Dec. Ladue Res. (5) (PE), 9 Dec. L. Rockwell (6) (LR), 11 Dec. Gilmore Ponds (6) (PW), 26 Jan. E. Fork Lk. (6) (DG). HORNED GREBE: 4 Dec. E. Fork Lk. (24) (HA), 6 Dec. Wellington Res. (12) (ETH), 1 Jan. Buck Creek SP (3) (DO). RED-NECKED GREBE: 5 Dec. Cowan Lk. (LG), 9 Dec. Bresler Res. (RCu). FARED GREBE: 2 Dec. HBSP (TL). DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT: 2 Dec. Buck Creek SP (DO), 12 Feb. Cleveland (7) (TL), 3+ L. Erie reports. GREAT BLUE HERON: 2 Dec. ONWRC (48), 9 Dec. CPNWRC (20), 11 Jan. Ottawa Shooting Club (32) (DKr), 13 Jan. Toledo (65) (TK, MA), 10 Feb. Buck Creek SP (18) (DO). BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON: 31 Dec. Pickerel Creek WA (DKr), 13 Jan. Toledo (25) (MA, TK). TUNDRA SWAN: 2 Dec. Buck Creek SP (37) (m.ob.), 2 Dec. Findlay Res. (101) (BH), 9 Dec. CPNWRC (66), 26 Dec. Wadsworth (80) (fide LR), 27 Jan. Ashland Co. (KMe), six wintered in Wayne Co. (EM). MUTE SWAN: 9 reports. TRUMPETER SWAN: 13 Jan.-3 Feb. ONWR (HSH, ET, m.ob.)*. GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE: 24 Feb. Spring Valley (m.ob.). SNOW GOOSE: 2 Dec. ONWRC (38), 3 Feb. ONWRC (54), 9+ additional reports. CANADA GOOSE: 2 Dec. ONWRC (8500), 18 Jan. Akron (3000) (LR), 20 Jan. Maumee (1200) (MA), 27 Jan. Charles Mill Res. (650) (KMe), 3 Feb. ONWRC (11,000), 9 Feb. Killdeer Plains (400) (DO), 10 Feb. CPNWRC (3030). WOOD DUCK: 4 Dec. Pickerel Creek WA (16) (DKr), 3 Jan. Cleveland (LR), 15 Jan. Cincinnati (15) (JSt). GREEN-WINGED TEAL: 2 Dec. ONWRC (151), 8 Dec. Buck Creek SP (6) (DO), 11 Dec. Gilmore Ponds (5) (PW), 21 Dec. L. Isaac (RH). AM. BLACK DUCK: 2 Dec. ONWRC (1385),

26 Dec. HBSP (80) (LR), 1 Jan. Buck Creek SP (75) (DO), 19 Jan. Gilmore Ponds (50) (m.ob.), 10 Feb. CPNWRC (660), 20 Feb. Wayne Co. (65) (ETH). MALLARD: 2 Dec. ONWRC (12,400), 9 Dec. CPNWRC (3278), 5 Jan. Akron (900) (LR), 1 Feb. L. Isaac (1500) (RH), 2 Feb. Buck Creek SP (500) (DO), 20 Feb. Wayne Co. (425) (ETH). NORTHERN PINTAIL: 2 Dec. ONWRC (83), 10 Feb. CPNWRC (72), 20 Feb. Wayne Co. (28) (ETH), 13 additional reports. BLUE-WINGED TEAL: 11 Dec. Gilmore Ponds (PW). NORTHERN SHOVELER: 2 Dec. ONWRC (50), 7 additional reports. GADWALL: 2 Dec. ONWRC (108), 31 Dec. Wingfoot Lk. (53) (LR), 10 additional reports. EURASIAN WIGEON: 2 Jan. Rocky River (JE). AM. WIGEON: 2 Dec. ONWRC (126), 11 additional reports.

Diving Ducks

CANVASBACK: 2 Dec. ONWRC (567), 13-21 Jan. Bayshore Power (max 10,000) (MA, TK), 13 Jan. CPNWRC (500), 16+ additional reports. REDHEAD: 4 Dec. E. Fork Lk. (60) (HA), 1 Jan. Cleveland (130) (LR), 21 Jan. Bayshore (350) (TK), 10 Feb. CPNWRC (36), 24 Feb. Buck Creek SP (20) (DO), 9 additional reports. RING-NECKED DUCK: 1 Dec. Wilmington Res. (40) (LG), 9 Dec. L. Rockwell (376) (LR), 14 Dec. Hamilton Co. (35) (YM), 24 Feb. Buck Creek SP (40) (DO). LESSER SCAUP: 13 Jan. Lorain (80) (PE), 10 Feb. CPNWRC (300), 24 Feb. Buck Creek SP (15) (DO). GREATER SCAUP: 3 Jan. Rocky River (3000+) (m.ob.). HARLEQUIN DUCK: 13 Jan.-23 Feb. Cleveland (m.ob.). OLDSQUAW: 17 Dec. Oberlin Res. (2) (ETH), 2 Dec.-20 Jan. Buck Creek SP (DO), 26-29 Dec. Fairport

Harbor (LR), 12 Jan. HBSP (ECP), 22 Jan. Cleveland (TL), 25 Feb. Cleveland (TL). WHITE-WINGED SCOTER: 5 Jan. Rocky River (ECP), 20 Jan. Buck Creek SP (DO). BLACK SCOTER: 15 Dec. Euclid (LR), 3-15 Jan. Rocky River Pk. (m.ob.). SURF SCOTER: 15 Dec. Euclid (LR), 3 Jan. Hueston Woods SP (5) (DD, DS), 3-15 Jan. Rocky River Pk. (max 13) (m.ob.), 20-24 Feb. Edgewater Pk. (3-5) (TL, LR). COMMON GOLDENEYE: 9 Dec. CPNWRC (331), 3 Jan. Cleveland (76) (LR), 5 Jan. Buck Creek SP (40) (DO), 10 Feb. CPNWRC (3020), 100+ wintered in Akron (LR), 8+ additional reports. BUFFLEHEAD: 2 Dec. Mogadore Res. (28) (PE), 3 Jan. Cleveland (28) (LR), 13 Jan. Buck Creek SP (12) (DO), 16 Feb. Lakewood Pk. (70) (TL). HOODED MERGANSER: 2 Dec. ONWRC (127), 2 Dec. Buck Creek SP (40) (DO), 6 Dec. Oberlin Res. (50) (ETH), 9 Dec. L. Rockwell (286) (LR), 9 Dec. CPNWRC (32). COMMON MERGANSER: 400 in Jan. at Fairport Harbor (LR), 10 Feb. CPNWRC (135), 9+ additional reports. RED-BREASTED MERGANSER: 27 Jan. Avon Power (50) (PE) [few reports]. RUDDY DUCK: 17 Dec. Oberlin Res. (200) (ETH), 3+ additional reports.

Vultures through Falcons

BLACK VULTURE: 3 Feb. Ross Co. (4-6) (m.ob.), 18 Feb. Athens Co. (2) (fide VF). TURKEY VULTURE: 23 Jan. Paint Creek SP (SW), 27 Jan. Knox Co. (DK), 3 Feb. Ross Co. (DO). BALD EAGLE: 6 inland reports, nesting now at Killdeer Plains, nesting at Mosquito Lk. (DJH). NORTHERN HARRIER: 16+ reports, maximum 15-20 at Killdeer Plains, 23 Jan. Paint Creek SP (16)

(SW). SHARP-SHINNED HAWK: 15+ reports. COOPER'S HAWK: 30+ reports; numbers increasing. NORTHERN GOSHAWK: 16 Jan. Cincinnati Zoo (DF) [no details], 27 Jan.-10 Feb. Seneca Co. (ad) (TB, m.ob.). RED-SHOULDERED HAWK: 17+ reports. RED-TAILED HAWK: 2 Dec. ONWRC (16), 6 Jan. Trumbull Co. (15) (DJH), 23 Jan. Paint Creek SP (29) (SW). ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK: 12+ reports, max. 29 Dec. Ashland Co. (8) (JVH), 19 Jan. Killdeer Plains (14) (ECP). AM. KESTREL: 23 Jan. Paint Creek SP (50) (SW), 3 Feb. Ross Co. (8+) (m.ob.), 6 Dec. Lorain Co. (11) (ETh). MERLIN: 26 Dec. Fairport Harbor (LR), 2 Jan. Cleveland (LR), 10 Jan. Cincinnati (JK) [no details], 19 Jan. Killdeer Plains (ECP), 20 Jan. Germantown Res. (DN, CM). PEREGRINE FALCON: 10 Jan. Toledo (ET), 2-15 Jan. Burke Airport (1-2) (LR, PE).

Pheasants through Gulls

RING-NECKED PHEASANT: 8 reports. WILD TURKEY: 23 Dec. Richland Co. (10) (JVH), 25 Dec. Shawnee Lookout (5) (MM). NORTHERN BOB-WHITE: 4 reports. VIRGINIA RAIL: 13 Jan. Springville Marsh (TB, KB, JB). COMMON MOORHEN: 18 Dec.-21 Jan. Gilmore Ponds (FR, CS). AM. COOT: 2 Dec. ONWRC (132), 9 Dec. CPNWRC (73), 19 Jan. Gilmore Ponds (48) (m.ob.). SANDHILL CRANE: 14 Dec. Wyoming (125) (JD). KILLDEER: 2 Dec. ONWRC, 8 Dec. Buck Creek SP (60) (DO), 9 Dec. Newtown (24) (WR), 29 Dec. Meigs Co. (29) (VF), 5 Jan. Tuscarawas Co. (ES), 4 Feb. Lucas Co. (MA) [early migrant]. LEAST SANDPIPER: 9-16 Dec. Newtown

(WR), 15 Dec.-13 Jan. Buck Creek SP (DO, m.ob.). PURPLE SANDPIPER: 2 Dec. HBSP (2) (JVH, TL), 1 Jan. HBSP (TL). DUNLIN: 2 Dec. ONWRC (6). COMMON SNIPE: 2 Dec. Buck Creek SP (12) (DO), 2 Dec. ONWRC, 15 Dec. Athens Co. (VF), 16 Dec. Pickerel Creek WA (DKr), 24 Feb. C.J. Brown Res. (5) (DD). AMERICAN WOODCOCK: 4 Feb. Carriage Hill Res. (BD). FRANKLIN'S GULL: 24 Dec. Springfield Lk. (LR). BONAPARTE'S GULL: 2 Dec. ONWRC (2016), 9 Dec. Eastlake (5000) (PE), 9 Dec. CPNWRC (1150). THAYER'S GULL: 1 Jan. Eastlake (LR), 16 Feb. Cleveland (LR). ICELAND GULL: 31 Dec. Toledo (TK), 1 Jan. Cleveland (LR), 16 Feb. Lorain (TL), 16-23 Feb. Cleveland (TL), 16 Feb. Metzger Marsh (ECP). LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL: 1 Dec.-16 Feb. Lorain (m.ob.), 31 Dec.-21 Jan. Toledo (TK, MA), 1 Jan. Eastlake (LR), 6-19 Jan. Cleveland (RH). GLAUCOUS GULL: 4 Jan.-16 Feb. Lorain (1-2) (m.ob.), 6-13 Jan. (1-2) Toledo (TK, MA), 20 Jan. Cleveland (DJH), 19-27 Feb. Cleveland (TL). GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL: 2 Feb. Lorain (150) (JVH). BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE: 1 Dec. Eastlake (LR), 6 Jan.-1 Feb. Lorain (1-2) (m.ob.).

Owls through Crow

SNOWY OWL: 1 Jan.-12 Feb. Burke Airport (m.ob.). LONG-EARED OWL: 5 Jan. Williamsburg (RL), 6 Jan.-17 Feb. Killdeer Plains (max 17) (m.ob.), 20-27 Jan. Germantown Res. (max 6) (m.ob.), 1 Feb. Sycamore SP (MM), 24 Feb. ONWR (ET). SHORT-EARED OWL: 6 Dec. Pickerel Creek WA (DKr), 20 Dec.-1 Jan. Mansfield Airport (6-7) (JVH, KMø), 2 Jan. Lunken Airport (Cincinnati) (13) (SC), 19

Jan. Holmes Co. (10) (ES), 26 Jan. Columbiana Co. (3-4) (DJH, NB), 9-17 Feb. Killdeer Plains (max 25) (m.ob.), 25 Feb. Athens Co. (VF), through period near Green Springs (Seneca Co.) (12) (TB, m.ob.). N. SAW-WHET OWL: 7 Dec. Butler Co. (NK), 26 Dec.-2 Jan. Mohican SP (JVH), 27 Dec.-24 Feb. Clermont Co. (1-2) (m.ob.), 6 Jan.-17 Feb. Killdeer Plains (max 4) (m.ob.), 10 Feb. Seiberling Nature Ctr. (LK). BELTED KINGFISHER: 10+ reports. RED-HEADED WOODPECKER: 5 reports. YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER: 4 reports. NORTHERN FLICKER: 13 Jan. Buck Creek SP (10) (DO). PILEATED WOODPECKER: 20-27 Jan. Germantown Res. (11) (m.ob.), 27 Jan. Vinton Co. (6) (DO). EASTERN PHOEBE: 8-22 Dec. Tuscarawas Co. (ES), 15 Dec. Athens Co. (VF). HORNED LARK: 22 Jan. Hancock Co. (275) (BH), 23 Jan. Paint Creek SP (100) (SW), 3 Feb. ONWRC (125), 16 Feb. Ashland Co. (200+) (JVH), 18 Feb. Trumbull Co. (100+) (DJH). TREE SWALLOW: 1 Dec. Beaver Creek Res. (TB). AMERICAN CROW: 2 Dec. Oak Openings (3500) (TK), 17 Dec. Athens Co. (500+) (VF), 11,000 wintered at Mansfield (JVH).

Nuthatches through Warblers

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH: 8 reports. CAROLINA WREN: 30 Dec. Meigs Co. (64) (VF). WINTER WREN: 7+ reports. MARSH WREN: 8 Dec.-13 Jan. Buck Creek SP (DO), 22 Dec. Wayne Co. (JVH). GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET: 2 Dec. Hamilton Co. (20) (NK, CS), 15 Dec. Athens Co. (33) (VF). RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET: 5 Dec. Lima (RCu), 13 Jan. CVNRA (LK). EASTERN BLUE-BIRD: 15 Dec. Athens Co. (50) (VF). HERMIT THRUSH: 5 records. AM. ROBIN: 12 Jan. Canfield (46) (NB), 13 Jan.

Buck Creek SP (35) (DO), 15 Jan. Akron (50) (LK), extraordinary numbers in the Fairport area (LR). GRAY CAT-BIRD: 30 Dec. Meigs Co. (VF), 18 Jan. Holmes Co. (EM). BROWN THRASHER: 5 reports. AM. PIPIT: 30 Dec. Meigs Co. (VF), 19 Jan. Tuscarawas Co. (ES), 16 Feb. Ashland Co. (KMe, JVH). CEDAR WAXWING: 8 Jan. Hancock Co. (157) (BH), 26 Jan.-18 Feb. Whitehouse (max 270) (MA, TK). NORTHERN SHRIKE: 14+ reports from 1 Dec. [another good movement]. LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE: 29 Dec. Gilmore Ponds (JBe). YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER: 10+ reports. YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER: 10 Nov.-20 Jan. Holmes Co. (NT)*. PINE WARBLER: Two wintered in Toledo (WS). OVEN-BIRD: Mansfield CBC (MT)*. COMMON YELLOWTHROAT: 9-28 Feb. Spring Valley (TLi, CC).

Cardinal through Grosbeaks

NORTHERN CARDINAL: 15 Dec. Athens Co. (211) (VF). RUFOUS-SIDED TOWHEE: 15 Dec. Athens Co. (39) (VF), 30 Dec. Meigs Co. (23) (VF), more numerous in Springfield area this winter (DO). AM. TREE SPARROW: 2 Dec. ONWRC (154), 9 Dec. Trumbull Co. (50) (DJH), 15 Dec. Miami-Whitewater (100) (JSt), 20 Dec. ONWR (45) (ET), 13 Jan. Trumbull Co. (40) (NB), 29 Jan. Hancock Co. (43) (BH). FIELD SPARROW: 15 Dec. Athens Co. (31) (VF). VESPER SPARROW: 26 Jan. Pickaway Co. (ES). SAVANNAH SPARROW: 15 Dec. Miami-Whitewater (JSt) 5 Jan. Tuscarawas Co. (ES). SHARP-TAILED SPARROW: 10 Dec. Gordon Pk. (TL) [few details]. FOX SPARROW: 5 reports. SONG SPARROW: 15 Dec. Athens Co. (131) (VF), 30 Dec. Meigs Co. (100) (VF), 29 Jan. Hancock Co. (31)

(BH). LINCOLN'S SPARROW: One wintered at a Lorain County feeder (ETh) [no details]. SWAMP SPARROW: 6+ reports. WHITE-THROATED SPARROW: 30 Dec. Meigs Co. (112) (VF). WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW: 15 Dec. Miami-Whitewater (50) (JSt), 9+ reports. DARK-EYED "OREGON" JUNCO: 3 Dec. Shaker Lks. (VF), 24 Jan. Peninsula (LR), one wintered at Girard (DJH), 24 Feb. Cincinnati (CA). LAPLAND LONGSPUR: 31 Jan. Lucas Co. (25) (TK), 3 Feb. ONWRC (6), 16 Feb. Ashland Co. (JVH), two additional reports. SNOW BUNTING: 26 Dec. Killdeer Plains (45) (PE), 13 Jan. Trumbull Co. (30) (DJH), 15 Jan. Findlay Res. (75) (BH), 24 Jan. Lucas Co. (115) (ET), 27 Jan. Columbiana Co. (60) (NB), 17 Feb. Richland Co. (110) (KMe), 17 Feb. Holmes Co. (100) (DK). RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD: 1 Dec. Trumbull Co. (225) (DJH), 2 Dec. ONWRC (166). EASTERN MEADOWLARK: 30 Dec. Meigs Co. (9) (VF), 18 Feb. Trumbull Co. (6) (DJH), 8+ additional reports. RUSTY BLACKBIRD: 2 Dec. ONWRC (25), 9 Dec. CPNWRC (35), 10 Dec. Pickerel Creek WA (40) (DKr), 5 additional reports. BREWER'S BLACKBIRD: 26 Jan. Pickaway Co. (20-25) (ES). COMMON GRACKLE: 29 Dec. Meigs Co. (7000) (VF), 22 Feb. Richland Co. (350) (KMe). BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD: 8 Jan. Hancock Co. (163) (BH). NORTHERN "BULLOCK'S" ORIOLE: 8, 23 Dec. Akron (LK)* [see Records Committee Report]. PURPLE FINCH: 10 reports. PINE SISKIN: 13 reports, no large numbers noted. AMERICAN GOLDFINCH: Jan./Feb. Oak Openings (150+) (MA). EVENING GROSBEAK: 1 Dec.-28 Feb. Hocking Co. (max 146) (JF), 29 Dec. Mohican SP (127) (SM), 10 additional reports.

Addendum

A Dickcissel was photographed at Castalia, Ohio, on 29-30 Jan. 1990.

Records Committee Report

Twelve rare species documentations were reviewed by the Records Committee for the 1990-1991 winter season. The committee accepted 10 of the 12 reports and these are listed elsewhere in this issue. The two records that were not accepted are discussed below as well as comments on two of the accepted species. We are also pleased to announce that Vic Fazio has joined the committee. Vic is presently a graduate student at Ohio University and has extensive experience with Ohio's birds.

Franklin's gull, E. Fork Lake CBC. Photographs of this bird suggest it was a Laughing gull rather than a Franklin's gull.

Empidonax, sp. Parkersburg, WV - OH CBC. The description did not rule out other flycatchers or (more likely) Ruby-crowned kinglet. Besides, we are not told whether the bird was in West Virginia or Ohio.

Trumpeter swan, January 13, ONWR. Committee accepts as Trumpeter swan, but all questioned the origin of the bird.

Northern "Bullock's" oriole, December 8, Akron. Committee accepts as Northern oriole. The description re

ceived by the committee did not rule out "Baltimore" oriole. We understand that there are good photographs of this bird, but we were not privy to them.

Observers

Matt Anderson (MA), Henry Armstrong (HA), Carol Avril (CA), Carol Babyak (CB), Janice Barnes (JB), Tom Bartlett (TB), Jim Becker (JB), Jeff Belth (JBe), Joe Bens (JB), Betty Berry (BB), Charlie Berry (CBe), Charles Bombaci (CBo), Elmer Bonkamp (EB), Stan Brown (SB), Nancy Brundage (NB), Chuck Buechele (CBu), Cliff Cathers (CC), Laurie Cathers (LC), Dwight & Ann Chasar (DAC), Sandy Cooper (SC), Bill Creasey (BC), Robert Cutter (RC), Bill Dare (BD), Dave Dister (DD), Paul Ellsworth (PE), Vic Fazio (VF), Doug Feist (DF), Jim Fry (JF), Larry Gara (LG), Darlena Graham (DG), Fritz Haas (FH), Betty Hardesty (BH), Bob Heidelberg (BHe), Bob Herbst (BHR), Ginny Herbst (GH), John & Vicki Herman (JVH), Jim Hill (JH), Hank & Sally Hiris (HSH), David & Judy Hochadel (DJH), Erin Jackson (EJ), Joe Kappa (JKa), Ned Keller (NK), Tom Kemp (TK), Everitt Kitchen (EK), David Kline (DKl), Joe Komorowski (JK), Len Kopka (LK), Dan Kramer (DK), Randy Lakes (RL), Bill Lehman (BL), John Leon (JL), Tom LePage (TL), Tim Little (TLi), Ed Lux (EL), Charlotte Mathena (CM), Millie McCarty (MMc), Lee McNeeley (LM), Bea Mercer (BM), Monte Mercer (MMe), Morris Mercer (MM), Kevin Metcalf (KM), Ervin Miller (EM), Yvonne Mohlman (YM), Bob Nelson (BN), Carey Nelson (CN), Dave Nolin (DN), Doug Overacker (DO), Ed & Cheryl Pierce (ECP), Deb-

bie Quilligan (DQ), Worth Randle (WR), Frank Renfro (FR), Larry Rosche (LR), Charlie Saunders (CS), Ed Schlabach (ES), John Shrader (JS), Wilma Seiler (WSe), William Smith (WS), Jay Stenger (JSt), Merrill Tawse (MT), Erdine Thompson (ETh), Elliot Tramer (ET), Nelson Troyer (NT), Sue Utterback (SU), Steve Wagner (SW), Paul Wharton (PW).

Announcements

This will be my last issue as Co-editor of the Ohio Cardinal. Beginning with the next (spring) issue, Rob Harlan of Parma Heights will take over the seasonal editing of the magazine. Many thanks to Matt Anderson, Dorothea Barker, Elliot Tramer, and Pete Montion for their assistance the past four years. Ed Pierce will continue as the other Co-editor in charge of mailing and subscriptions and editing the Christmas bird counts. All seasonal reports should be sent to Rob at the following address: 7072 Parma Park Blvd., Parma Heights, Ohio 44130.

Our apologies for not including the Christmas Bird Count results in this issue. The counts were not ready at press time. Contact Ed Pierce, CBC editor, if you have questions about the counts.

The Toledo Rare Bird Alert is back on line. The new number is 419-875-6889.

Northern Saw-whet Owls and other Raptors Wintering at Killdeer Plains

Kim Stahler, Dan Frevert, Nelson Moore, and Bret Stahler

With the permission of the Division of Wildlife, ODNR, we began a Raptor Survey Project at Killdeer Plains, an 8,627 acre wildlife area, located in southern Wyandot and northern Marion Counties, Ohio. Originally, the area was a wet prairie with heavy clay soils that farmers found difficult to drain resulting in marginal farmland. Today it is managed for waterfowl, upland game and field trials, and consists of croplands, meadows and scattered woods. The area attracts many overwintering raptors, raptor watchers and hunters. The area is divided into two parts. The western half is designated a wildlife area with public access, but the eastern half is designated refuge and not open to the public.

The authors, assisted by a large number of volunteers, have been studying the following questions: 1) What raptor species are present and what are the population sizes? 2) What are the age and sex characteristics of each population? 3) What are the spatial and temporal parameters of each population? We have employed the methods of regular road censusing, foot censusing, spot checks and banding to answer these questions.

Twenty-five censuses taken on a 30-mile road route have produced an average of 41 raptors/count with a

range of 20-84 birds. The majority of raptors include the Red-tailed Hawk, 34%; Short-eared Owl, 22%; Northern Harrier, 20%; Rough-legged Hawk, 9%; and American Kestrel, 7%. Other raptors commonly seen are Bald Eagle, Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, and Red-shouldered Hawk. Species observed by banding procedures and casual or spot checks are Northern Shrike, Merlin, Great Horned Owl, Long-eared Owl, Barred Owl, Barn Owl, Screech Owl, and N. Saw-whet Owl.

We were surprised to band 21 Saw-whet Owls, a much larger number than expected. The saw-whets were captured and recaptured on one site, a 2 acre pine woods within the wildlife area. The area was surveyed one or two times a week. All birds were aged as having hatched during 1990.

Fourteen were banded between November 24 and December 9 with band numbers 1201-03060 to 1201-03072 and 1201-03076. The first five and lat two of this group were recaptured one or more times in the months of January and March. As an example, bird number 1201-03064 was banded on November 25, 1990, and then recaptured on January 13 and February 20, 1991, a time span of almost three months.

The remaining 7 birds were banded between January 5 and February 13, 1991, with band numbers 1204-03077 to 1204-03082 and 1193-96143. Birds banded with numbers 1204-03080 and 1204-03081 were each recaptured one time, two to three weeks later. Bird 1193-96143 was banded February 13 and then recaptured February 20 and March 20.

Although we only have one season of data, it appears to us that Saw-whet Owls had already migrated into Killdeer or were in the process of migrating by the end of November because of the large number of birds banded at this time. These birds were probably banded late in migration because Peterjohn (1989) states, "While the earliest migrants have been discovered in northern and central Ohio by September 27-28, most are reported between October 15 and November 20." But it does appear that movement continues into the area even during January and February. The recapture data indicate that once birds arrive, at least half tend to stay for one to three months.

On a routine census of a Long-eared Owl roost, a Saw-whet Owl band number 1204-03072 was found mixed among owl pellets at the base of the roost tree along with primary feathers and other body parts. The evidence is circumstantial, since it is possible that Barred or Great Horned Owls which occur in the area killed the owl, but this may be an instance of Long-eared Owl predation on a Saw-whet Owl. In the future we hope to study further the interaction of these owl species and to compare these data with other banders' data and observations.

We thank the following people for their many hours of assistance: Ron Austing, Mike Bolton, Deb Eisasser, Barb Faber, Karen Niller, Rex Miller, Shawn Miller, Sheila Miller, Jo Ann Moss, Diane Myers, Mark Shieldcastle, Don Stanley, and Dan Wisener.

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Biology Department
Ohio Northern University
Ada, OH 45810



Northern Saw-whet Owl, Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area. *Photograph by Kim Stahler.*

Bald Eagles Nesting at Killdeer Plains

Daniel Frevert and Dr. Nelson Moore

I arrived at Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area, as the new area manager, in October of 1989. A pair of Bald eagles arrived the same month and decided to stay also. The staff at Killdeer Plains hoped the eagles would nest in the spring of 1990 along with transient eagles passing through Killdeer. This winter the awaited nest appeared. The seventeenth eagle nest in Ohio is located 1/2 mile east from my residence, at the Killdeer Plains headquarters. Their notoriety this spring has led to traffic jams, particularly on nice weekends. So much for the peaceful life in the country.

Although the eagles were only 3 and 4 years old in the spring of 1990, the pair remained and in December of 1990 began construction of a nest. Bald eagles become sexually mature at 3 years of age. The eagles exhibit distinct plumage differences, according to age, until they acquire the distinctive solid white head and tail at 5 years of age. The nest was first observed during the Christmas Bird Count, and at that time was thought to be a hawk nest. Dr. Nelson Moore and Kim Stahler were the first people to spot the pair of eagles on the nest while conducting a car census for the Killdeer Plains Raptor Project. Since December the nest has grown 3 feet in diameter.

The eagles and their nest have had some difficulties this winter. First year nesters typically are not famous

for choosing good trees and sites to begin construction. Our eagles chose a cottonwood tree with two small and two large supporting limbs. The two small limbs are on the same side, and on March 1 one of those branches broke out under the increasing weight causing the nest to lean somewhat. They have rectified this problem by adding more material to the stronger side of the nest and correcting the angle. Problems have also arisen from people either walking out to the nest or airplanes flying at tree top height to get a better view of the nest. This activity may cause the eagle's to abandon their nest. An endangered species zone has been established within the refuge to protect the eagles even further. The refuge at Killdeer Plains was established primarily for waterfowl and has always been off limits to the general public. The Bald eagle is both federally and state protected under The Bald Eagle Act and Endangered Species Act.

As of this writing the eagles have put their nest back in shape and have shifted the center of activity to the stronger part of the fork, on the north side. Although at first glance the nest appears to lean somewhat, the eagles have leveled the actual nesting area with sticks and grass. The nest is lined with grass and the eagles, along with other raptors, keep some green vegetation on the nest to show other raptors the nest is occupied. Eggs were laid during the week of March 3 to 9

and on March 9 the eagles began incubating their egg(s), as observed by Gary Braun, Game Protector Supervisor-Unit E. On average Bald eagles lay two rounded ovate eggs (7.0 x 5.3 cm) and the eggs require 35 days of incubation to hatch. The eggs are dull white or pale bluish white and usually stained brown during incubation. Both male and female take turns incubating the eggs. We currently are unaware as to the number of eggs present in the nest. Our hatch date at Killdeer should be on or about April 12.

Along with the other eagle nests in Ohio this nest will be observed by a core of volunteers throughout the nesting season, until the eaglets have fledged. A Bald Eagle Nest Monitoring Program is operated each year by the Division of Wildlife with the invaluable assistance of volunteers state wide. With the aid of volunteers we will be able to establish an accurate date of incubation and hatch, possible cause of egg or eaglet failure, and problems concerning the adults. The exact hatching date is very critical, because if the eggs fail to hatch when expected we will be able to inspect the eggs for the cause of failure. We will also turn the unhatched egg(s) or dead eaglet(s) over to a federal agent, who in turn sends the same to labs in Madison, Wisconsin for pathological, heavy metal, and pesticide tests. Nest monitoring, by volunteers and Div. of Wildlife personnel, is an essential part of the state wide Bald Eagle program.

When our eaglets reach 6 to 7 weeks of age they will be lowered out of the nest, banded, checked for gen-

eral health, and raised back up into the nest. At 6 to 7 weeks of age the eaglets are still relatively easy to work with and stress to the bird is kept to a minimum. The young eaglets will leave the nest at about 10 to 13 weeks of age. The fledglings generally tend to remain in the vicinity of the nest until they become more independent of their parents. They also require a minimum of human disturbance while they are at this stage of their life cycle, along with an area with plenty of snags to perch and hunt from. The staff at Killdeer will be observing the fledglings as they hunt in and around the pond #27 area of the refuge. Pond #27 is an 820 acre marsh, constructed in 1969 with funds from sportsmen, and is bounded by county highways 75 north, 68 south, 115 west, and 119 east. The eagle nest is located on the northwest side of pond #27. The refuge area of Killdeer, on the north side of pond #27, should provide good habitat for the fledgling(s). The pair of adults will remain in the area and continue to occasionally feed their young. Immature bald eagles usually migrate south in the fall while the adults stay in the area year round.

The eagles have been observed carrying various kinds of prey up to the nest to feed on. Some of their known foraging successes have included Canada geese, Black ducks, Mallards, Muskrats, and fish. Eagles primarily prefer fish and pond 27 should provide a good supply of Carp and Catfish. Fledglings will be feeding on dead fish or carrion that are washed up on shore, while they hone their hunting skills on live prey.

With a current total of nineteen eagle nests in Ohio we are almost to the goal set by Div. of Wildlife, for 20 nests by the year 2000. Fostering is a technique that has been used successfully in the past to increase or bolster our eagle population. Since 1979 the Division of Wildlife has introduced 11 artificially raised eaglets into nests. Every eaglet has been accepted by the adults. The years of 1978 and 1979 marked the low point of the eagle's past in Ohio, with only 1 young raised each of those years. Last year 12 eaglets were raised in Ohio, the most since records were first kept in 1959. Fostering is not used in Ohio now because the eaglets are placed into states where the eagle population is in need of assistance. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service is the federal agency that has responsibility for eagles across the U.S. The Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Columbus Zoo, Cleveland Zoo, and Patuxent Research Center have raised eaglets that have been fostered into Ohio's nests in the past.

This new pair of eagles at Killdeer marks the farthest incursion by eagles into the interior of Ohio since records were first collected in 1959. This also marks the seventeenth nesting pair in Ohio, although 2 other new pairs have been discovered this year bringing the total to nineteen. Ohio has 15 Lake Erie nests, 3 north-eastern Ohio nests, and 1 inland nest at Killdeer. The Division of Wildlife is looking at other wildlife areas in the state for potential nesting sites, such as Killbuck and Resthaven Wildlife Areas. The future for the Bald eagle in Ohio looks very promising with the continuing support of volunteers, do-

nations to Wild Ohio tax checkoff program, and the Division of Wildlife's Bald Eagle management program.

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County Hwy. 115, Rd. #1
Harpster, OH 43323

December Bullock's Oriole - in Ohio?

Len A. Kopka

My backyard in west Akron consists mainly of mixed deciduous hardwoods and it slopes directly into a deep ravine that is part of the Sand Run Metro Park system. Resident chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, starlings, woodpeckers, and goldfinches regularly deplete the seed from my feeders. And, I always look forward to the occasional appearance of the two Pileated woodpeckers that whack away at my suet feeder just 30 feet outside my patio window. Although my yard has produced it's fair share of avian surprises during both migration seasons, December is generally considered a lackluster month.

So you can imagine the excitement on December 8, 1990, when I saw an orange colored bird foraging on the ground among a small flock of starlings. My Nikon 9x25's are always within arms reach, and within seconds, I knew I had an immature male oriole. I studied the bird for about 2 minutes, getting only brief glimpses of key field marks. Succumbing to the ultimate temptation, I finally committed the mistake of fetching my field guides. Quickly to my bookshelf, quickly back. This is more than enough time for a rare oriole to disappear for the next two weeks.

By the time it finally returned on December 23, Larry Rosche and I had already concluded that I was documenting Ohio's 2nd record of a wintering Bullock's Oriole. A literature search revealed that the only other documentation was at a Columbus feeder during the winters of 1974/75 and 1975/76. Other references suggest that wintering records of this western relative of our "Baltimore" have come from points as far east as the eastern seaboard, usually at feeders.

My camera was loaded, tripod mounted, and armed with a 300mm lens. But the bird either moved too frequently, or it stubbornly remained hidden from portrait view on the back side of the feeder. Although a photograph was not possible, I had plenty of time for a good visual study. Bill and Jackie Haley arrived as soon as they could, but by that time, of course, the bird had departed. Fred Fricker came later in the day, and within minutes of his arrival, we were both rewarded with another splendid showing.

Out of nowhere, a group of starlings flew in; the oriole came down to my hanging feeder and proceeded to gorge himself on shelled sunflower seeds. Fred and I both had ample time to view it from just under 20 feet.

The bird was about 7" long. The head, nape and breast were orange. A pair of white wing bars (one narrow, one bold) were prominent on the otherwise dull olive/gray wings. The olive color on the back extended all the way down to the tip of the tail. The under tail coloration was much lighter, tinted with orange, and the belly was nearly all white. A very faint black eyeline extended from the base of the black bill through the eye. The throat boasted a distinct but rather blotchy black bib.

During the next week while I was away from home, the bird reappeared for a final encore. My wife, Ginger, was able to take a series of excellent photographs. The photos have been studied by a number of very knowledgeable birders, all of whom concur with the identification.

I was delighted to learn 3 weeks later that Marilyn Bangs (a novice neighborhood birder whom I still haven't met) made a telephone report to Bert Szabo. She described an oriole-like bird in her backyard. It has become apparent to me that this orange jewel from the western states had decided to remain in the area this winter and give others the same excitement that it had given me.

751 Newcastle Dr.
Akron, OH 44313

[Editor's Note: See the Records Committee report for comments on this record.]

Forty-eight counties received coverage for the 1990-1991 Winter Season. Christmas Bird Count coverage is not included here.



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