

The Ohio



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The Ohio Cardinal exists to provide a permanent and timely record of the abundance and distribution of birds in Ohio; to help document the occurrence of rare species in the state; to provide information on identification of birds; and to provide information on birding areas within Ohio.

The Ohio Cardinal invites readers to submit articles on unusual occurrences of birds, bird distribution within the state, birding areas in Ohio, identification tips, and other aspects of ornithology. Bird reports and photographs are welcome from any area in the state. Report forms are not a necessity but will be supplied on request. Unusual species should be documented--documentation forms are also available on request from the Editor, Publisher, and Records Committee Secretary.

In order to keep The Ohio Cardinal timely, seasonal reports are due by the following dates:

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

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Cover: Am. Woodcock, Resthaven WA (Erie Co.), 6/2/96.
Photo by Gary Meszaros.

First Documented Ohio Nesting Attempt of the Clay-colored Sparrow

by John Watts and Mac Albin

[John Watts is assistant resource manager and Mac Albin is aquatic biologist for the Columbus and Franklin County, Ohio, Metropolitan Park District. Mr. Albin was an interpretive naturalist at Battelle-Darby Creek Metro Park during the summer of 1996.]

On June 6, 1996, at approximately 7:30 a.m., while conducting a breeding bird survey in a large grassland area at Battelle-Darby Creek Metro Park (Pleasant Township, Franklin County, Ohio), the 3-4 note repetitive "buzzy" song of the Clay-colored Sparrow was heard. The bird was found in a small American Elm in an adjacent old field. It maintained a territory of approximately one-quarter acre, singing from several perches. The bird was observed for about two hours by up to four observers, during which time it was also photographed. Over the next two weeks, numerous birders from central Ohio observed the individual.

On or near June 26, two separate reports of a second bird were made to Metro Parks staff. On July 1, park naturalist Mac Albin also felt confident that he had observed a second Clay-colored Sparrow in the territory. On July 2, John Watts and Mac Albin arrived at the site at approximately 7:00 a.m., and observed the territory from two vantage points. Once again, the male sang from the American Elm.

At 8:05 a.m., the second bird was located carrying a beakful of nesting material. The bird, which was presumed to be the female, flew into a multiflora rose. A few moments later she was joined by the male, and the two were observed mating in a dead shrub.

The pair was observed at some distance for approximately 35 minutes. During that time the female was also photographed carrying nesting material. As she made several trips to the adjacent grassy field to collect nesting material, she was always accompanied by the male. The male, however, made no effort to collect any nesting material. As she returned to the nest site, the male perched in a nearby tree and resumed singing. This "male guarding" habit was consistent during the entire time of observation, and the male accompanied her on every trip in several directions.

After about 35 minutes of observation, the nest was located in the multiflora rose, and appeared to be nearly complete. The nest was composed of grass with a lining of finer grassy material. The nest was woven into the center of the rose and was supported by its larger stems. On this date the area was posted with Ohio Division of Wildlife Endangered Nesting Species signs.

The habitat can be described as an old field with scattered small green ash, honeylocust, hawthorns and American Elms. Herbaceous species consisted of cool season grasses, black-eyed Susans and prairie coneflower. The territory was estimated to be approximately one-quarter acre in a field of about five acres, with 20 acres of adjacent grassland.

On July 11, the area was rechecked. No eggs were found in the nest and the female could not be located. The male, however, was still

singing on territory. On July 24, the area was searched thoroughly in hopes of locating the female or a second nest. Neither the male nor female was present and the original nest was in the same condition as before. The following measurements were taken after nest abandonment: multiflora rose 44 inches tall; nest located 7 1/2 inches off the ground; nest outside diameter 2 7/8 inches; nest inside diameter 1 3/4 inches; nest depth 1 3/4 inches.

On August 8, the nest was photographed and collected. The nest is to be deposited in the bird nest collection (Higher Vertebrate Collection) at Ohio State University's Museum of Biological Diversity.

This is the first known nesting attempt of the Clay-colored Sparrow in Ohio. B. Peterjohn (Birds of Ohio, 1989, p. 195) lists the Clay-colored Sparrow as a casual but fairly regular spring migrant along L. Erie, mostly from Ottawa and Lucas counties, and from near Cleveland. Most Ohio records occur between April 25 and May 22. Accidental records also exist for Franklin and other counties.

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[Editor's note: this record has yet to be reviewed by the Ohio Bird Records Committee].



Male Clay-colored Sparrow. Battelle-Darby Creek MP, June 6, 1996
Photo by John Watts.

The Effects of Stripmining on Ohio's Breeding Birds by Jim McCormac

From the perspective of sheer ecological destruction, few activities in Ohio's history can match open-face mining, better known as stripmining. Conceived as a cost-efficient method of extracting coal from shallowly buried seams, stripmining began to take place in southeastern Ohio around 1920. The methodology behind this form of mining is simple. The overburden (topsoil) is stripped from the earth, exposing the underlying beds of coal, thereby allowing massive quantities of the black mineral to be quickly and efficiently excavated. These operations took place on a staggering scale, and the machines which were created to remove the millions of tons of overburden have become the stuff of legends. The giant draglines were truly marvels of modern engineering, and perhaps the best known of them all was the "Big Muskie". With a 400 foot boom and weighing over 13,000 tons, it took approximately 12,500 volts of electricity to power the "Muskie", and its enormous shovel could hold 220 cubic yards of material.

Obviously, the "Big Muskie" and other machines like it were capable of permanently altering the topography of southeastern Ohio on a massive scale, and that's what they did. Between 1920 and continuing to the present, thousands of acres were stripmined, affecting most southeastern counties. Hardest hit by mining were the counties of Harrison and Vinton, where destruction of the original natural features was nearly complete in many areas.

Prior to the advent of stripmining, the coal-bearing region of unglaciated Ohio consisted primarily of rugged hills carpeted with thick deciduous forest. The variation in topography from summit to base of these hills and knobs allowed a diversity of forest types to thrive, with an attendant diversity of woodland bird species. The highest ground was covered with dry oak-hickory associations, and birdlife was characterized by Wild Turkey, Summer Tanager, Yellow-throated Vireo, and Cerulean Warbler, among others.

The middle and lower slopes supported a more mesic forest community, dominated by trees such as Red Oak, Tuliptree and Sugar Maple. These rich woodlands harbored a diversity of bird species, including Eastern Wood-Pewee, Wood Thrush, Scarlet Tanager, Red-eyed Vireo, Hooded Warbler, and Ovenbird, to name but a few.

Floodplains and stream terraces occupied the bottomland between hills, and species like Sycamore, American Elm and Green Ash were some of the dominant trees. Some of the birds found in this habitat were Barred Owl, Acadian Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Warbler and Louisiana Waterthrush. Additionally, the steeper, cooler ravines supported Hemlock groves, in which rarer bird species bred, such as Hermit Thrush, Solitary Vireo and Canada Warbler.

All of this changed dramatically, and on an enormous scale, when a stripmining operation moved into an area. The forests were leveled. Entire stream courses were moved or altered. Hills were removed or substantially re-arranged, and the delicate balance of soil composition, which dictates what types of vegetation will grow, was obliterated. The aftermath of one of these stripmines resembled a lunar landscape of barren, acidified soil; jagged, misshapen slag heaps of coal refuse and overburden; and orange-tinted streams due to the infusion of iron

sulfides. Birdlife on the unreclaimed stripmines was reduced to practically nothing, as were most other forms of life.

In 1977, the federal government passed the Surface Mining and Reclamation Control Act, administered by the Department of Interior, Office of Surface Mining. This law mandated that after a surface mining operation was finished, the area must be reclaimed. Of course, it would be impossible to restore these areas to their original contours and forest communities, so reclamation efforts took a different tack.

To date, reclamation has consisted largely of smoothing the contours of the land by grading down the highwalls and slag piles, thereby creating a gently undulating landscape of rolling hills. Then, the areas were sowed with a mixture of hardy, non-native grasses such as Quackgrass (*Agropyron repens*) and Kentucky Fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*). The end result is a habitat radically different than what was once there; indeed, the reclamation sites resemble miniature African plains and savannahs. In fact, several thousand acres of this habitat has been used to establish "The Wilds", a large game farm dedicated to the preservation, propagation and study of African animals such as giraffe and elephant, among others.

An unintended result of the stripmine reclamation projects has been the creation of thousands of acres of open grassland habitat, which has proven to be suitable for a number of species of grassland birds. Many of these species historically would have been quite rare in southeastern Ohio, if they occurred there at all. Also, most of the birds which utilize reclamation areas had been dependent upon farming practices in the glaciated regions of the state to provide habitat. As more of the smaller farms have disappeared, to be replaced by large-scale operations, there seem to be fewer of the fallow fields required for breeding. It appears that there has been a shift of these grassland bird populations to the large reclaimed stripmines, where the largest numbers of many species can now be found.

It is worth noting that of the nine or so "grassland" bird species that are presently using the reclamation areas, probably all were very rare in Ohio prior to European settlement. At that time, due to the extensive forest cover in this region, there was very little suitable habitat for these species, and their populations were centered farther to the west. As the development of agriculture opened the forest and created habitat, grassland bird species expanded eastward to exploit the newly created areas. The abundance of incidentally created grassland-like habitat as a by-product of farming probably peaked in the early to middle part of this century. Since then, there seems to have been a steady diminishment of habitat, and a correlating reduction in numbers of grassland birds. Reclaimed stripmines have, at least on a localized level, caused significant increases in these bird populations. This too, however, will likely be a relatively short-lived phenomenon, as coal mining grinds to a halt in Ohio, and the now suitable grasslands gradually succeed to woody vegetation.

Species Abundance

I have been informally and intermittently surveying reclamation sites for about 18 years now, and the following is my assessment of the status of grassland birds utilizing these areas. Admittedly, the term "grassland bird" is somewhat ambiguous. For the purpose of this study, they are defined as species which require larger (several acres or more) areas of

open land dominated primarily by grasses, with little woody vegetation. My assessments are as follows:

N. Harrier-- Rare but regular summer resident. Most of the larger areas have at least single, unmated birds. These usually are non-breeding subadult birds, but at least on a couple occasions pairs have been seen, as well as adults. They probably breed very rarely and locally.

Upland Sandpiper-- Several records of single birds. They probably nest rarely and locally, but annually, although this has yet to be confirmed.

Short-eared Owl-- Breeding occurs only on a rare and local basis.

Dickcissel-- Uncommon and local. They are not difficult to find, and most of the larger areas have them, although usually found as widely scattered single individuals or small colonies of a few birds. Numbers vary from year to year.

Savannah Sparrow-- Common and widespread. This sparrow is easily found throughout virtually all of the reclamation areas.

Grasshopper Sparrow-- Common and widespread. Like the Savannah Sparrow, this species is easily found throughout virtually all of the reclamation areas.

Henslow's Sparrow-- Common, and can be locally abundant. I have seen loose colonies of 50+ singing males. More often than not, a stop anywhere in a reclaimed area will yield at least one singing Henslow's Sparrow.

Bobolink-- Locally common. Widely scattered small colonies, normally of a dozen or so birds, seem to occur throughout most of the reclamation areas.

E. Meadowlark-- Common and widespread throughout all of the reclamation areas.

Selected Reclaimed Stripmine Birding Areas

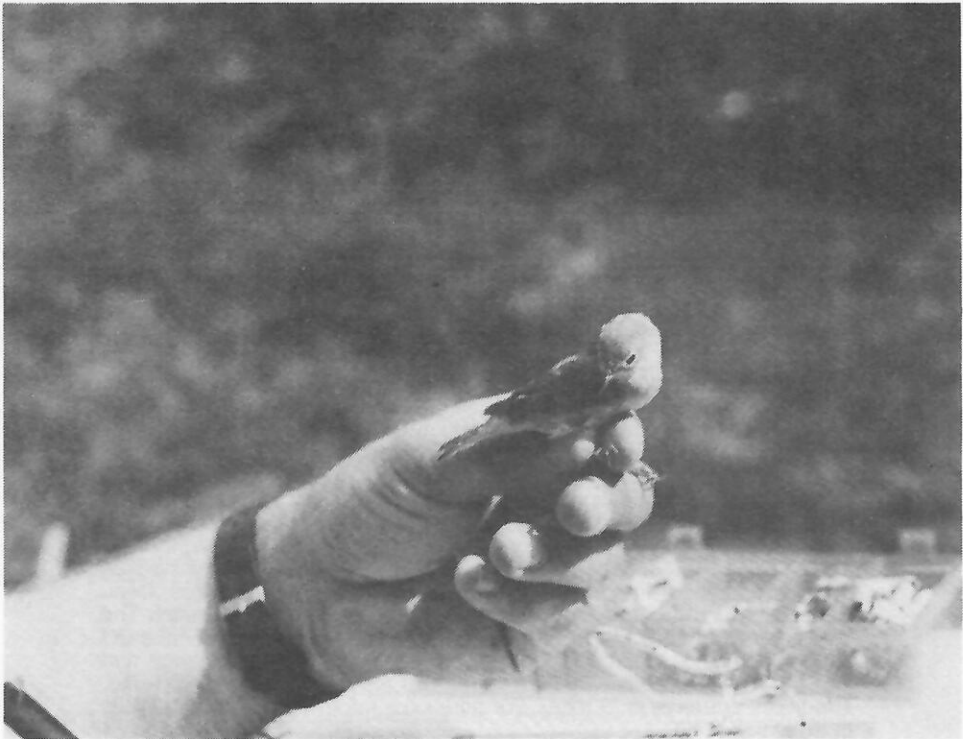
1. The Wilds, Muskingum Co. (mostly): This is a privately owned center dedicated to propagation, research and education involving "megavertebrates"-- animals large enough to require vast areas in which to roam. Comprising almost 14 square miles of reclaimed mine land, The Wilds has some interesting grassland birding. N. Harriers, Dickcissels, Bobolinks and Henslow's Sparrows can usually be found without undue difficulty, and watch for Short-eared Owl, as they are sometimes present in the summer [Editor's note: Short-eared Owls nested during the summer of 1997]. If one gets bored with the birding, there are always interesting mammals to view-- Fringe-eared Oryx, Reticulated Giraffe, and Black Rhino, to name but a few. To reach The Wilds, take OH 83 south from I-70, go 12 miles to Cumberland, take OH 146 west 5 miles to Zion Ridge Rd., go 3.5 miles to the stop sign and turn left onto OH 284. Go 1 mile and turn left onto International Road. The Wilds entrance is .5 mile. For additional information, call The Wilds at (614) 638-5030.

2. Dundas Area, Vinton County: This area encompasses several hundred acres of grassland just southeast of Dundas, in Clinton Twp. Take OH 93 south from McArthur (county seat of Vinton Co.) approximately 2.5 miles to the town of Dundas. Take OH 324 to the left (south) for 2 miles, and you will pass directly through the reclaimed grasslands. N. Harriers are often seen here, as are large colonies of Henslow's Sparrows.

3. Woodbury Wildlife Area, Coshocton County: Parts of this 18,127 acre wildlife area contain reclaimed grasslands. Perhaps the most accessible are along OH 541 in Bedford Twp., 1 mile east of Tunnel Hill and OH 60. Many of the grassland bird species occur here, including the occasional Short-eared Owl and Dickcissel.

There is no doubt that reclaimed minelands are currently providing an abundance of suitable grassland habitat, and grassland bird species are exploiting it. The reclamation areas have unexpectedly replaced an ecological niche which is declining elsewhere in Ohio, and offer the birder interesting areas to explore which are quite unlike any other habitats in the state.

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Female Nashville Warbler with brood patch. Hell's Hollow MP, 5/23/96.
Photo by Jackie Kodromaz, banded by John Pogacnik.

Nesting Nashville Warblers in Summit County, Ohio by Norman J. Kotesovec, Jr. and Sean Zadar

A nest of the Nashville Warbler (*Vermivora ruficapilla*) was discovered at Horseshoe Pond, near Peninsula (Summit Co.) in the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area (CVNRA) on June 13, 1996. We spotted the nest while censusing a population of Blue-winged Warblers (*V. pinus*) as part of an ongoing study of their reproductive success in Northeastern Ohio (see Canterbury, et al. 1995). While following a banded male Blue-winged Warbler along a deer run lacing the abundant plantings of young spruces, we chanced to flush a tiny drab bird from the ground. We examined the area and found the remains of three nestlings that were patterned somewhat like young Blue-winged Warblers, having yellow feathers along the abdominal regions of the ventral tract and unsheathed rectrices that appeared blue, or slate-gray, in color. One nestling bore a puncture upon its breast; a second, a large hole in the skull; and the third was badly mutilated. It seemed that the first Blue-winged Warbler nest found during the study had been depredated.

We continued our search and soon uncovered the nest, in which was huddled the lone survivor, colored and patterned in the same manner as its unfortunate siblings. If, indeed, a "Blue-winged" nest, it was a most atypical one, as it was a simple, but finely woven structure, hidden carefully beneath a grass hummock. It was also not a bulky affair as most Blue-winged nests tend to be; neither was its cup set in a pile of leaves. Only a couple of tiny skeletonized leaves had been used along with some mosses tucked around its sides. Nevertheless, proceeding under the assumption that we had found a Blue-winged Warbler nest, we set up a mist net in hopes of capturing and banding the female when she returned to feed her sole-surviving youngster. We put up the net, moved a short distance off, and waited. It was not too long afterwards that a bird flew in and was entrapped. Running forward to liberate the warbler, we discovered-- much to our surprise-- not a Blue-winged, but a Nashville Warbler entangled in the net. After freeing the bird, we carefully examined her in the hand; and, while 99.9% certain of the identity of our catch, we consulted a field guide to compare the markings of the Nashville Warbler against field marks of the female Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*). Suffice it to say, without going into a lengthy comparison, our bird matched perfectly the description of the Nashville Warbler.

Though certain of the bird's identity, we were not fully convinced that the Nashville was the parent and not a late migrant instead. Although we hid a short distance away, the female Nashville remained shy and aloof and treated us to only a few glimpses the remainder of our stay. Our visit on the following day proved equally fruitless, and all that we were able to confirm was the presence of the male Nashville, as two birds now joined in the confusion.

When discovered, the nestling was fairly well feathered with eyes fully opened. As teleoptiles emerge from the feather sheaths on the seventh day (Williams, 1996), we aged the bird accordingly and judged that it might fledge on June 15 or 16, its 9th or 10th day of nest life (Williams, *op. cit.*). The nestling appeared older than the mutilated siblings, which were collected and sent to Ronald A. Canterbury at Cleveland State

University. These depredated young were identified to be 5-6 days old (Canterbury, pers. comm.). This would suggest that the nest was depredated about two days before discovery. Arriving on the morning of June 15 at 8:00 a.m., we resumed our vigil. Unlike previous outings, the female Nashville ventured into plain view, foraging within a stand of nearby Eastern Cottonwoods (*Populus deltoides*). Also promising was the response of the male Nashville to a playback of a recording of its song. The male was seen to fly from within the spruces, over the tape recorder, and into the cover of adjacent shrubbery.

Over the next hour, the female Nashville repeatedly perched upon the branch tips, flicked her wings, and bobbed with agitation before retreating into the spruces. She persistently gave loud "chip" calls. Finally, at 9:10 a.m., the female dropped from the trees to the ground; and, from where we were concealed, we were able to see the warbler approach the nest. At 9:30 we inspected the nest and found that the nestling had fledged. All that remained to mark its journey was a discarded fecal sac.

Few records have been published of summering Nashville Warblers in Northern Ohio. Single males in Ashtabula Co. during 1928 and 1929 were reported by Hicks (1933) and an unpaired male was found in Stark Co. in 1936 (Peterjohn and Rice, 1991). In 1982, during the Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas project, a male Nashville Warbler established a territory in Lorain Co., but no mate or nest was found (Peterjohn and Rice).

There are only two state records of nesting Nashville Warblers in Ohio, both based on adults feeding young. It is unclear if any nest has been previously discovered. While Hicks (1933) reports that "a male was observed feeding a fledgling just out of the nest" in the Pymatuning Bog area of Ashtabula Co. on June 15, 1931, he makes no mention of a nest-- details of which are scrupulously given for other species that he considered "very rare and local" (i.e. Black-throated Blue Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler etc.).

Ohio's only other breeding record was provided by observations of a pair of Nashville Warblers in Stebbins Gulch (Geauga Co.) on several occasions from June 10-27, 1969. The female Nashville was seen feeding a fledgling Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) on June 24-25 (Flanigan, 1969).

As there seems to be no published description of a Nashville Warbler nest for Ohio, dimensions are as follows (measurements taken with a dial caliper): outside diameter (with moss lining)-- 6.5 x 11.2 cm., inside diameter-- 5.8 cm., and depth-- 3.4 cm. These measurements are within the range of values given in Williams (1996), except for the outside diameter, in which the cup (6.5 cm.) fell short of the range and the moss foundation exceeded it (range 7-10.5 cm.). The nest itself, a thinly woven cup set in a shallow depression beneath an overhanging grass hummock, was composed of very fine grasses. Its foundation was constructed chiefly of moss, with a few skeletonized leaves and broken twigs. The rear of the nest, set against the grass hummock, was devoid of any material foundation.

The vegetation surrounding the nest was not dense, but was dominated by Prickly Dewberry (*Rubus flagellaris*), grasses (*Gramineae*) and, to a lesser degree, goldenrods (*Solidago* sp.). Also evident were hawkweed (*Hieracium* sp.), milkweed (*Asclepias*), cinquefoil (*Potentilla*), Heal-all (*Prunella vulgaris*), European Buckthorn (*Rhamnus frangula*) and a variety of mosses (*Bryophyta*). Shrubs included Northern Arrowwood (*Viburnum recognitum*), Cockspur Hawthorn (*Crataegus crusgalli*) and other *Crataegus* species. White Ash (*Fraxinus americana*) and Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*) saplings were present; and young trees, ranging in height from approximately 2-5 meters, included Red and White Oak (*Quercus rubra* and *Q. alba*, respectively), while a stand of second growth Eastern Cottonwood grew nearby. The most prominent species of tree was the numerous Blue Spruce (*Picea pungens*) plantings that bordered the nest and ranged from approximately 1-5 meters in height. The site is best characterized as an old field habitat progressing from field to pioneer scrub and trees.

Acknowledgements

The senior author wishes to credit Sean Zadar with the discovery of the nest. We are grateful to the CVNRA and Cleveland Metroparks for allowing us the use of their lands for this research. We also thank Ronald A. Canterbury for his valuable comments on an earlier draft of the manuscript and counsel over the course of the study. The female Nashville Warbler was banded (#2080-92591) under USFWS federal permit #22576-C.

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Birding the Miami-Whitewater Wetlands **By Ned Keller and Paul Wharton**

[Editor's note: this article is adapted from two articles that appeared originally in the September 1996 issue of "Passenger Pigeon", the newsletter of the Cincinnati Bird Club.]

An Introduction to the Area **by Ned Keller**

The wetlands area of Miami-Whitewater Forest (Hamilton Co.) has become perhaps the best area for marsh birding in southwest Ohio, surpassing even Spring Valley WA. To reach the Miami-Whitewater wetlands, take the Dry Fork exit (Exit 3) from I-74. Coming from Cincinnati, turn right (north) onto Dry Fork Rd. After 2.3 miles, bear right onto New Haven Rd., then left after 0.7 miles onto Oxford Rd., and left again after 0.1 mile onto Baughman Rd. Park on the right in a dirt area past the bike trail and just past a small pond (0.6 mile). Walk back to the pond, and follow the dike out to the north into the fields, following the unofficial birder's paths along a treeline. The official trail, Shaker Trace, is designed for bicycles and misses the better birding areas. A new observation deck is accessible from both the dike and from Shaker Trace.

In addition to the marsh birds described below, the area is also good for dabbling ducks and fair for diving ducks in migration. Common Snipe are abundant in early spring, and other migrant shorebirds may be found in numbers that vary with water levels.

The wetlands are surrounded by fields, which the Hamilton County Park District is in the process of converting from cropland to prairie. Grasshopper and Savannah Sparrows are present in summer, while N. Harrier and Short-eared Owl have been found in the winter. Small numbers of Savannah Sparrows have also been found in the winter. Dickcissel and Upland Sandpiper appear occasionally in migration. Another group of ponds, which are good for ducks but not so productive for marsh birds, may be found on the other side of Baughman Rd., another 100 yards past the parking area.

The Birds of Miami-Whitewater Wetlands **by Paul Wharton**

In a few short years, the Miami-Whitewater wetlands have changed from farmland to the premier birding hotspot in Greater Cincinnati. Its unique habitats are a magnet for migrants and breeding birds. One look at the Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas will show just how much the Ohio breeding ranges for many species have been impacted.

Historically, Pied-billed Grebes have nested in the L. Erie marshes, with a few breeders as far south as Gilmore Ponds (Butler Co). However, since the creation of the wetlands, they have become regular breeders there. In 1996 there were at least five successful nests, with one being

a probable second brood. American Bitterns always cause excitement, so when I saw six on May 4, 1996, I was ecstatic. When I continued to see and hear them in late May, I cautiously suspected breeding. Then, in June, a nest with four eggs was found!! This was southern Ohio's first nesting record in many, many years. Least Bitterns are also of special interest. At least eight nests with eggs have been found, and others were likely overlooked in the masses of cattails. Green Herons were confirmed as nesters when an unusual stick-nest was found in the cattails. To top off the heron family, an immature Little Blue Heron and a small flock of Cattle Egrets were seen in early May.

At least three male and two female Ruddy Ducks actively courted through May and June, 1996, but I found neither nests nor young. "Woodies" and Mallards are common breeders, but no Blue-winged Teal nested in 1996, although they have in the past.

Rails can be abundant migrants, with 96 Soras seen on May 4, 1996! A few were reported throughout the nesting season of 1996, the same being true for Virginia Rails. A King Rail nest was found in 1995, but they could not be found in 1996. Common Moorhens nested again, and American Coots had at least eight nests in 1996- the first Hamilton County record in at least 20 years.

Missing since 1992, Sedge Wrens were again found in August 1996 in two separate fields. Marsh Wrens were strangely absent in 1996, after three pairs in 1995.

For sparrow enthusiasts, the wetlands are tough to beat. The large field between New Haven Rd. and Baughman Rd. hosted four pairs of Grasshopper and two pairs of Savannah Sparrows in 1996. A Henslow's Sparrow was heard near the woodlot in late July, but not found subsequently.

When I first heard about the 1000 acres that the Park District bought in 1989, I feared that we'd get more golf courses. So far, they've done a great job of creating and maintaining wetland habitat.

For a complete day of birding, Miami-Whitewater Metropark, just to the south of Miami-Whitewater Wetlands, offers an impressive array of nesting woodland birds, including good numbers of Hooded, Cerulean and Kentucky Warblers, Ovenbirds, Louisiana Waterthrushes, and more.

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Summer 1996 Overview by Robert Harlan

The confirmed nesting of Clay-colored Sparrows at Battelle-Darby Creek MP (Franklin Co.) was the big news for this season. Although the nest did not bring off any young, the attempt was noteworthy nonetheless. This species has become substantially more "findable" in Ohio in both spring and fall migrations in recent years; although certainly still a rare bird. The habitat favored by the Battelle-Darby Creek birds is very reminiscent of the habitat in which Ohio's first summer record was discovered-- a singing bird found for a single day in a large, overgrown briar field in the Summit Co. portion of the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area on 6/19/94.

Just how unusual is it to discover a new confirmed nesting species for Ohio? It seems certain that it is far more difficult to confirm a new nester than it is to discover a new species for Ohio! Nesting season studies are of great, although perhaps underappreciated, importance. Look for interesting nesting studies in this issue as well as in the next. The Geauga Co. Prothonotary Warbler project and a nest survey of the Ira Rd. section of the CVNRA are scheduled to appear in the Autumn issue.

"The Reports" section is intended to be read in phylogenetic order. Although the following accounts use the most current specific names as dictated by the American Ornithologists' Union, the order of appearance does not yet reflect the most current changes. County names are sometimes abbreviated by using their first four letters-- "Holm" representing Holmes County, for example. Other place name abbreviations found in this issue are: BuCr (Buck Creek State Park, a.k.a. C.J. Brown Reservoir, Clark Co.); CVNRA (Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, Cuyahoga/Summit Cos.); FRes (Findlay Reservoirs, Hancock Co.); GLSMFH (Grand Lake-St. Mary's Fish Hatchery, Auglaize Co.); HBSP (Headlands Beach SP, Lake Co.); HHMP (Hell's Hollow Metropark, Lake Co.); Kibk (Killbuck Wildlife Area, Wayne/Holmes Co.); KPWA (Killdeer Plains WA, Wyandot Co.); Lksh (Lakeshore MP, Lake Co.); Magee (Magee Marsh WA, Ottawa/Lucas Cos.); MCMWA (Mallard Club Marsh WA, Lucas Co.); Metzger (Metzger Marsh WA, Lucas Co.); MWW (Miami-Whitewater Wetlands, Hamilton Co.); OkOp (Oak Openings MP and vicinity, mostly Lucas Co.); ONWR (Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, Ottawa/Lucas Cos.); PCWA (Pickercreek Creek WA, Sandusky Co.); & SVWA (Spring Valley WA, Greene/Warren Cos.).



Red Crossbills. Elmore (Ottawa Co.), 7/30/96.
Photo by Sharon & Bill Dailey.

Loons through Herons

Common Loon-- Non-breeding laggards were as follows: 4 at the Findlay Reservoirs [hereafter FRes] (Hanc) 6/4-11, with 1 there 6/25 (BH); at least 5 birds at 3 Allen Co. reservoirs through 7/27 (DD); & 1 at Burr Oak SP (Athe/Morg) for most of July (LB).

Pied-billed Grebe-- Confirmed nesters include at least 5 nests at Miami-Whitewater Wetlands [hereafter MWW] (Hami) in early June (PW); 3 downy chicks at Grand River WA (Trum) 7/28 (DJH); 3 ad. & 7 juv. at Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge [hereafter ONWR] (Otta/Luca) 7/14 (CH); & 1 ad. & 1 juv. at Mallard Club Marsh WA [hereafter MCMWA] (Luca) 7/28 (CH). 18 were at Magee Marsh WA [hereafter Magee] (Otta/Luca) on both 6/16 & 7/21 (HSH). Also found in the following counties: Bult, Clar, Erie, Hanc, Lake, & Warr.

Double-crested Cormorant-- 1470 nests were found at W. Sister Island (Otta) (BSBO). Also summered at numerous inland lakes.

Am. Bittern-- Only reports: 1 MCMWA 6/1 (TK); 1 Magee 6/16 (HSH); & 1 at the Rogers Rd. field at N. Chagrin MP (Cuya/Lake) 6/28 (NBa). Amazingly, a nest was found at MWW 6/9 (PW).

Least Bittern-- Singles were at Mentor Marsh SNP (Lake) 6/1 (KM) and again 7/14 (EB, RHn, AM); at Medusa Marsh (Erie) 6/9 (CH); & at Ashtabula Harbor (Asht) 7/5 (JP). Up to 5 birds were found at Spring Valley WA [hereafter SVWA] (Gree/Warr) for most of July (m. obs.). At least 8 nests were discovered at MWW (PW) & at least 1 nest was found at Gilmore Ponds Interpretive Preserve (Butl) 7/1 (PW).

Great Blue Heron-- Largest reported colonies were 1225 nests at W. Sister Is. (BSBO) & 358 nests at Lordstown (Trum) 6/8 (CB). Up to 75 birds were at the Lorain (Lora) lakefront dredge disposal impoundment in July (NBa, NKR).

Great Egret-- W. Sister Is. hosted 700 nesting pairs (BSBO). 6 birds at Gilmore Ponds 6/28 were somewhat unseasonal (G. Sadler). 10 were there 7/23 (D. Sadler).

Snowy Egret-- 10 pairs nested at W. Sister Is. (BSBO).

Little Blue Heron-- All reports: 3 adults Pickerel Creek WA [hereafter PCWA] (Sand) 6/15 (TLP); 1 Magee 6/16 (HSH); 1 ad. Pipe Creek WA (Erie) 7/7 (RHr, SWa); 1 imm. Lorain 7/20-21 (JP, TLP); 1 imm. Grand Lk.-St. Mary's Fish Hatchery [hereafter GLSMFH] (Augl) 7/27 (DD) & 2 Winton Woods MP (Hami) 7/27 (D. Andrews).

Cattle Egret-- Nested at Sandusky's Turning Point Island (Erie). Small numbers, presumably from this colony, were scattered about the w. L. Erie marshes (m. obs.).

Green Heron-- Up to 8 birds foraged at a Painesville (Lake) home pool, gleaning insects from the water's surface (T. Kallay, fide DBE). 5 birds each were at 3 additional northern sites and 1 southern site 6/29-7/24.

Black-crowned Night-Heron-- 500 nests were estimated at W. Sister Is. (BSBO). Despite no evidence of nesting at Greenlawn Dam (Fran), 2 ad. & 2 1st-spring birds were present 6/17 (AG). However, a very rare inland nesting was confirmed along Mill Creek near its junction with the Ohio River (Hami), when 21 nests were counted 7/1 (J. Hays).

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron-- Nesting attempts were not successful at Greenlawn Dam, but up to 2 birds were still seen intermittently through 7/26 (AG). Two adults were seen along the Sandusky River near Bucyrus (Craw) 6/6 (J. Little, Crawford Co. Parks naturalist, fide JH).

Waterfowl

Swans-- With the continued release of Trumpeter Swans, our swan picture becomes even more muddled. A single swan (presumably a Tundra) was at Killbuck WA [hereafter Klbk] (Wayn/Holm) 6/3 (LC). A bird at Conneaut Harbor (Asht) 7/5-30 was alternately reported as both a Tundra

and a Trumpeter (JP, CH).

Trumpeter Swan-- 10 released birds were tallied at Magee 6/16 (HSH).

Mute Swan-- Reported at 4 sites, max. 4 birds.

Wood Duck-- Max. 126 Magee 6/16 (HSH). 60 were at the Ira Rd. beaver marsh in the southern Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area [hereafter CVNRA] (Cuya/Summ) 7/29 (TMR).

Green-winged Teal-- 75 birds, almost all males, were counted at Metzger Marsh WA [hereafter Metzger] (Luca) 7/4 (RHR, SWa). Smaller numbers remained there and at Magee through the period.

Am. Black Duck-- 8 potential nesters were at Magee 6/16 (HSH). 4 were interesting at SVWA 7/23 (DBr), as were 2 at Caesar Creek Lk. 6/1 (NKe).

N. Pintail-- A male was at Lorain 7/7 (RHR, SWa).

Blue-winged Teal-- Potential nesters include up to 9 in Hancock Co. 6/4-7/16 (W. Seiler, fide BH); 6 at Magee 6/16 (HSH); 3 in Clark Co. 6/16 (DO); 13 at Pipe Creek WA 6/30 (CH); & a pair at Gilmore Ponds Interpretive Preserve 6/30 (DD).

N. Shoveler-- 1 was at MCMWA 6/1 (TK), while 2 were at Magee 6/16 (HSH).

Gadwall-- Possibly nested at MCMWA and Magee (TK, CH, HSH). 5 non-nesters were at Metzger 7/4-13 (RHR, SWa).

Am. Wigeon-- 3 males were at Pipe Creek WA 6/30 (CH). 4 birds were at Metzger 6/1 (TK) and 5 birds were there 7/7 (RHR, SWa).

Ring-necked Duck-- 2 were reported at Magee 6/16 (HSH).

Lesser Scaup-- A single was at MCMWA 6/1 (TK). A male and female were at Metzger 7/20 (CH).

Hooded Merganser-- 36 birds (3 females with broods) were found at PCWA 6/15 (TLP). Also nested

successfully in the n. CVNRA (DAC). Reported also at SVWA and in Paulding & Lucas Cos.

Common Merganser-- An intriguing report came from the Lake Co. Metroparks. At their Blair Rd. property, a female and 7 "recently fledged" young were reported along the Grand River on 6/6, and a female-plumaged bird was at the same location in mid-July (JP). This species has become a common nester along Pennsylvania rivers in recent years, and an Ohio nesting is certainly a reasonable possibility. However, we await an indisputable nesting to count this species among Ohio's breeding avifauna.

Ruddy Duck-- 4 reports: 1 FRes 6/4 (BH); up to 4 at MWW 6/2-9 (PW et al.); 1 Oberlin Res. (Lora) 6/11 (NKR); & a breeding-plumaged male at GLSMFH 6/29 (DD).

Vultures through Cranes

Black Vulture-- 1 at Salt Fork SP (Guer) 6/30 was of interest (SH).

Osprey-- 2 pairs nested this year. Last year's pair raised 1 young along the Ohio River near Rayland (Jeff) (MAR). Another pair nested at Berlin Res. (Port/Maho), apparently raising two young. Non-nesters were found in Athe/Morg, Geau, Guer, Lake, Tusc, & Warr Cos.

Bald Eagle-- A record 33 active eagle nests, including 5 new nests, were observed across the state this year. 20 pairs were successful, raising a total of 35 young. Three new nests were found along the Sandusky River, and single new nests were located in Mercer and Stark Counties (ODOW).

N. Harrier-- Found in the following counties: Erie, Geau, Hanc, Henr/Putn, Holm, Jeff, Lake, Lora, Luca, Musk, Paul, Tusc, & Vint. Although it is difficult to determine how many of these birds were actually attempting to nest, it seems that birds in at least 4 of the above counties likely nested.

Sharp-shinned Hawk-- Found at 4 Lake Co. locations. No actual nests or young were found, but nesting was strongly suspected at Chapin Forest

MP and Penitentiary Glen MP, both traditional nesting areas (JP).

Peregrine Falcon-- Released birds and their progeny are holding their own in major metropolitan areas statewide.

King Rail-- Several Kings were present in a 1-foot deep cattail marsh at ONWR throughout June. The birds were heard & flushed repeatedly during a nest predation experiment that allowed the observers to walk transects through the cattails (ET et al.).

Virginia Rail-- Reported from MWW, SVWA and Erie, Geau, Luca, Port, & Trum Cos.

Sora-- Reported from MWW and Cuya, Ota/Luca, & Trum Cos.

Common Moorhen-- Reported as follows: 1-2 Kibk 6/3-7/14 (LC, NKr, SH); 1 Medusa Marsh 6/9 (CH); 1 Egypt Valley WA (Belm) 6/10 (RHr, SWa); 3 Walborn Res. (Port/Star) 6/16 (B. Lane); 1 Herrick Fen SNP (Port) 6/25 (RHr, SWa) & 3 MWW 7/14 (PW). Successful nestings occurred at Shalersville (Port) (CH, LR); at SVWA (up to 6 birds seen during July) (m. obs.); & at MCMWA, where 10 birds, mostly juveniles, were seen 7/28 (CH). A nest was found at Gilmore Ponds 7/1 (PW).

Am. Coot-- At least 8 nests were found at MWW (PW). A pair were present at Mentor Veterans Pk. (Lake) until mid-June, although no evidence of nesting was found (JP). Other reports include: 1 Buck Creek SP [a.k.a. C.J. Brown Res., hereafter BuCr] (Clar) 6/3-8 (RHr, SWa, DO); 2 Findlay claypits (Hanc) 6/4 (BH); 2 Magee 6/16-7/21 (HSH); 4 Pipe Creek WA 6/30 (CH); 2 Gilmore Ponds 6/30 (DD) and 6 there 7/1 (PW); & 1 near Dundee (Tusc) 7/6 (ESC).

Sandhill Crane-- Although we received no reports, presumably this species again nested in the Wayn/Holm area.

Shorebirds through Terns

Am. Golden-Plover-- An adult was early at Metzger 7/4-14 (RHr, SWa, CH). Another bird was at Conneaut

7/28 (JP).

Semipalmated Plover-- Up to 11 spring migrants were at Lorain 6/2-5 (CH, TLP). 15 were southbound at Winton Woods MP 7/26 (J. Stenger).

Piping Plover-- An adult was documented from Metzger 7/20-22 (CH*, RJ, RHr, m. obs.).

Killdeer-- Max. 150 Metzger 7/4-14 (RHr, SWa, CH).

Am. Avocet-- 3 Metzger 7/7 (RHr, SWa), with 1 there 7/20-21 (CH); 1 Lorain 7/13 (TLP, CD) and 7/19 (TLP); & 1 Conneaut 7/16 (TLP, KM).

Greater Yellowlegs-- Earliest returnee was at Metzger 7/4 (RHr, SWa).

Lesser Yellowlegs-- Earliest returnee was in Concord Twp. (Lake) 6/20 (JP). Max. 50 Winton Woods MP 7/26 (JS).

Willet-- All reports: 1 Lorain 6/2 (CH); 1 Killdeer Plains WA [hereafter KPWA] (Wyan) 6/15 (RRO); 2 Lorain 7/7 (RHr, SWa), with 1 there through 7/22 (TLP, CD); & 1 Magee 7/21 (HSH).

Upland Sandpiper-- Surprising numbers were found in the northeast. LR located 1 in Fairport Harbor (Lake) 6/1, 1 in Nelson (Port) 6/8 & 14, and 1 nr. Notre Dame/Cathedral Latin School (Geau) 7/13. Thought to have nested in Leroy Twp. (Lake), where found 6/21-7/30 (JP); and along Stollaker Rd. in Denmark Twp. (Asht), where 8 birds (including at least 2 juv.) were seen 7/7 (CH). Elsewhere, 2 were at the Springfield Airport (Clar) 6/3 (RHr, SWa) & 1 was in northeast Paulding Co. 7/4 (DMD).

Whimbrel-- A single was at Metzger 7/4-7 (RHr, SWa), while 2 were at Burke Lakefront Airport (Cuya) 7/20 (JP).

Marbled Godwit-- 2 Metzger 7/4-7 (RHr, SWa); 1 Conneaut 7/5 (JP); & 1 Lorain 7/8 (TLP).

Ruddy Turnstone-- A spring migrant remained at Lorain 6/7 (TLP). 10 returned to Metzger 7/28 (RHr, SWa).

Red Knot-- Metzger held 3 spring migrants 6/1 (TK). A fall returnee was

there 7/15-16 (CH, RJ, RHr, SWa). Another was at Conneaut 7/28 (JP).

Sanderling-- 1 to 2 northbound migrants were at Lorain 6/7-8 (TLP). An adult was inland at BuCr 7/14 (DO). 11 birds were at Metzger 7/26 (ET).

Semipalmated Sandpiper-- 51 spring migrants were at Lorain 6/4 (TLP). 175 fall migrants were at Metzger on both 7/20 & 28 (CH).

Western Sandpiper-- The only report was of a bird at Metzger 7/28 (CH, RHr, SWa).

Least Sandpiper-- 2 late spring migrants were at Lorain 6/2 (CH). Peak count was 50 at Metzger 7/20 (CH).

White-rumped Sandpiper-- 2 spring migrants were at Metzger 6/1 (TK), and up to 5 were at Lorain 6/3-7 (TLP, RRI, D. & J. Hoffman).

Baird's Sandpiper-- 3 very early southbound birds returned to Lorain 7/19 (NBa). Singles at Metzger 7/24 (RHr, SWa) and ONWR 7/25 (TK) were also on the early side.

Pectoral Sandpiper-- Earliest migrants made it to Metzger 7/4 (1 bird, RHr, SWa) & FRes 7/9 (2 birds, BH). 20 were unusual at Winton Woods MP 7/26 (JS).

Dunlin-- An unseasonal single was at Metzger 7/7-20 (RHr, SW, CH).

Stilt Sandpiper-- The first southbound bird was at Metzger 7/13 (RHr, SWa). 1 in Paulding Co. 7/26 was of note (DMD), as was 1 at Winton Woods MP the same day (JS).

Short-billed Dowitcher-- One of our earliest fall migrants, 1 was at Lorain 6/28 (TLP). 85 were at Metzger by 7/28 (CH).

Common Snipe-- Two reports: 2 Irwin Prairie SNP (Luca) 6/7 (DO); & 5 Grand River WA 7/7 (CH).

Wilson's Phalarope-- Lone report was of a bird at Metzger 7/13 (RHr, SWa).

Laughing Gull-- An adult was observed at Lorain 6/11 (TLP) and

7/13 (CD). Another adult paused briefly at Metzger 7/7 (RHr, SW).

Franklin's Gull-- An adult was at Lorain 7/20 (JP). An adult missing part of a leg was at Caesar Creek Lk. (Warr) 7/31-8/1 (LG, J. Dunn).

Bonaparte's Gull-- 2 first-summer birds were interesting at GLSMFH 6/16 (DD). Up to 50 were at Metzger during July (RHr, SWa).

Herring Gull-- 700 pairs nested at W. Sister Is. this season (BSBO).

Glaucous Gull-- A very rare summer report was provided by a 1st-summer bird at Headlands Beach SP [hereafter HBSF] (Lake) 6/1 (KM et al.).

Great Black-backed Gull-- At least 20 summered at Lorain (CH). 1 was on S. Bass Is. (Otta) 7/17 (SWu).

Common Tern-- Nested successfully at Pipe Creek WA, with 40+ birds 6/30 (CH). 142 birds were there 7/19 (NBa). 3 were of note at Burr Oak SP 7/2 (LB).

Forster's Tern-- 3 were unexpected at L. Rockwell (Port) 6/26 (CH, LR). 1 was at Lorain 6/22 (JP). 1100 terns, both Common and Forster's, were at Metzger 7/28 (RHr, SWa).

Black Tern-- 2 spring migrants were at L. Rockwell 6/2 (G. & L. Kovach). 2 more cruised over Pine Lk. (Maho) all day 6/13 (RHe). At Metzger, up to 6 were seen 7/7-28 (m. obs.).

Cuckoos through Pipits

Black-billed Cuckoo-- Max. 5 Mosquito Lk. (Trum) 6/20 (DJH). Both cuckoo species were thought to be in good numbers at this site due to gypsy moth infestations.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo-- Highs include 12 at Mosquito Lk. 6/20 (DJH) and 6 at Kelley's Is. (Erie) 6/1 (PL).

Barn Owl-- A nesting pair was in Holmes Co. 6/1 (CD). One roosted in a Tuscarawas Co. silo for a day in late June (H. Hershberger, fide ESC).

N. Saw-whet Owl-- 3 newly fledged birds were found in a small grove of

hemlocks at Girdled Rd. MP (Lake) 7/3. The birds were being harassed by chickadees and titmice (JP).

Chuck-will's-widow-- Again this year, one, possibly two, birds were heard near the Holmes/Tuscarawas Co. border through late June, although no breeding evidence was noted (T. Miller, fide ESc). Three calling birds were in Gallia Co. in June (M. McConnel, fide JH). As expected in Adams Co.

Whip-poor-will-- 1 bird, believed to be a wandering nonbreeder, was heard in Munson Twp. (Geau) 6/9 (KM).

Red-headed Woodpecker-- Nested successfully at at least 7 sites in heavily populated Cuyahoga Co. this season (T. Leiden et al.).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker-- Sapsuckers were found at 2 Lake Metroparks areas: the Cascade Rd. property and at Girdled Rd. MP. At Girdled Rd., 1 ad. & 2 young were seen 7/3. At Cascade Rd., 2 ad. were observed going through courtship in late May and early June (JP).

Olive-sided Flycatcher-- Single spring migrants were at Lakeshore MP [hereafter Lksh] (Lake) (JP) and Kelley's Is. (BF, PL et al.), both 6/1.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher-- 12 spring migrants were banded at Lksh 6/1-9 (JP). Another late bird was at Brecksville MP (Cuya) 6/6 (TMR).

Acadian Flycatcher-- A late spring migrant moved through the Greenlawn Dam area 6/13 (AG).

Alder Flycatcher-- Presumably nested at Irwin Prairie SNP (TK, DO) and at Streetsboro Bog (Port) (CH, TLP). A bird at SVWA 7/13 was unusual (AG, L. Schultz).

Least Flycatcher-- Potential nesters were found in Clar, Geau, Hanc, Lake, Otta/Luca, & Summ.

Bank Swallow-- 3000 were estimated near the Pickaway Co. Airport 7/28 (RRo). 1250 were estimated at Metzger 7/21 (RHr, SWa).

Cliff Swallow-- Nesting reports were

received from Adam, Asht, Cler, Geau, Maho, Port, & Wayne counties. Undoubtedly nested in additional counties as well. 9 migrants were at Magee 7/21 (HSH).

Red-breasted Nuthatch-- Good numbers remained after the large invasion of Winter 1995/96. Successful nesting were detected at Lksh (JP) and Hinckley MP (NKO). Birds summered at Maumee SF (Luca), Oak Openings MP [hereafter OkOp] (Luca) (both TK) and at N. Chagrin MP (RRi, KM). Singles were seen at Mohican SP (Ashl) 6/8 (MH); in July at the Black Swamp Audubon Soc. Sanctuary in Paulding Co. (DMD); and at ONWR 7/31 (R.J).

Brown Creeper-- Creepers were seen at 3 locations in N. Chagrin MP 6/12-7/4, with nesting confirmed at one (KM). Found at 2 locations in Hell's Hollow MP [hereafter HHMP] (Lake), but nesting was not confirmed at either (JP). Up to 3 summered along the upper Cuyahoga River (Geau) (DBe, AF). A bird in Hocking Co. 6/15 was interesting (NKe, K. McDonald).

Winter Wren-- The cool, wet spring enticed this species to remain in large numbers. In Lake Co., wrens were found at 13 sites. Of these, 5 sites hosted confirmed nestings (JP, RRi). 2 singing males were found at N. Chagrin MP (KM). A bird was along the Highline Trail at Big Creek MP (Geau) 7/24 (T. Locher, fide DBe). A late spring migrant was at HBSP 6/3 (RRi).

Sedge Wren-- Considerably fewer reports than last summer. All reports: 4 OkOp 6/1 (TK); 3 terr. males at Mud Lk. SNP (Will) (JM, C.J); 1 KPWA 7/13 (CD), & 1 OkOp 7/25 (TK).

Marsh Wren-- Max. 9 Walborn Res. 6/16 (B. Lane) & 7 MCMWA 7/28 (CH). Nest building was observed at SVWA 7/14 (LG). Possible nesters were in the s. CVNRA, MWW, Medusa Marsh, Pipe Creek WA, Shalersville, Conneaut, Magee, Tare Creek Marsh (Geau), BuCr, Kibk, Resthaven WA (Erle), Plymouth Marsh (Asht), & Egypt Valley WA.

Golden-crowned Kinglet-- Nested again at Chapin Forest MP, being

found in a 40-year old Norway Spruce planting. Young were found there in late July (JP).

E. Bluebird-- 54 fledged from a bluebird trail at S. Chagrin MP (Cuya) (B. Frye, J. Kohler).

Gray-cheeked Thrush-- 7 spring migrants were banded at Lksh 6/1-2 (JP).

Swainson's Thrush-- The last spring migrant (6/16) and the first fall migrant (7/30) were both seen at Lksh by JP. 16 were banded there 6/1-9.

Hermit Thrush-- A pair was observed feeding a fledgling at Mohican SP 6/8 (MH). 4 singing males were at the same location 6/21 (LEY). Found at River Rd. MP and at HHMP in Lake Co. (JP). An individual was at Conkle's Hollow (Hock) 6/22 (LG).

Brown Thrasher-- 10 were tallied in Adams Co. 6/4 (RHr, SWa).

Am. Pipit-- An extremely late spring migrant was at HBSP 6/8 (RHn).

Vireos through Warblers

Bell's Vireo-- A territorial male was widely observed at Resthaven WA 6/4-7/29 (JM, m. obs.). A bird was as expected at BuCr 6/23-7/14 (DO).

Blue-headed Vireo-- Seemed normal.

Philadelphia Vireo-- Very late migrants were banded at Lksh 6/9 (JP) and seen in Hancock Co. 6/11 (BH).

Golden-winged Warbler-- A singing male was found at Girdled Rd. MP 7/3 (JP).

Tennessee Warbler-- Late spring migrants include 2 at Greenlawn Dam 6/4 (AG) and 1 in Hancock Co. on the same date (BH).

Nashville Warbler-- Apparently nested at along Paine Creek at HHMP. A pair were banded, and on 7/5 several young were seen, with one of these being banded 7/10 (JP).

N. Parula-- A lone singing male was again at Brecksville MP 6/16-7/14 (DAC, m. obs.). A singing male was

heard in the floodplain forest at Wildwood Preserve MP (Luca) 6/20, but could not be relocated in July (ET). Another northerly singing male was found at River Rd. MP (Lake) in mid-June (JP).

Yellow Warbler-- 20 migrants were noted at Metzger 7/28 (RHr, SWa).

Chestnut-sided Warbler-- The most unusual reports came from Henry Co. 6/23 (TK) and at MWW 7/14 (PW).

Magnolia Warbler-- 7 spring migrants were at HBSP 6/1 (KM). 7 more were banded at Lksh 6/1-9 (JP). Potential nesters were at 6 Lake Co. MPs (JP). 7 males were on territory at Hinckley MP this season (NKO). At Mohican SP 6/22, an adult was seen carrying food and young were heard (LEY). A singing male at Acacia Country Club (Cuya) through the end of June was presumably unmated (NBa).

Black-throated Blue Warbler-- A singing male was found at HHMP through early July. No evidence of breeding was found (JP). A late spring migrant was at HBSP 6/8 (RHn).

Yellow-rumped Warbler-- A non-singing male in winter plumage may have summered in a small area of conifers at Penitentiary Glen MP (JP).

Black-throated Green Warbler-- Leroy E. Yoder found 28 birds at Mohican SP on 6/21, in an area of the park he had not censused in previous years. 21 territorial males were at Hinckley MP this season (NKO).

Blackburnian Warbler-- A singing bird was found at Hogback Ridge MP (Lake), where young were seen in early July. Another singing bird was heard at Indian Point MP (Lake) into early July, although nesting was not confirmed at this site (both JP).

Yellow-throated Warbler-- In the northeast, singing birds were found along the Grand River and Paine Creek in Lake Co. (JP) and along the Cuyahoga River in Cuyahoga and Summit Cos. (m. obs.).

Pine Warbler-- Found at 6 northeastern sites (JP, RRI, DAC,

LR). Four birds were at Mohican SP 6/21 (LEY).

Prairie Warbler-- Nested in Concord Twp. (Lake) 7/10-30 and seen in Leroy Twp. (Lake) 6/4 (both JP). 25 were counted in Adams Co. 6/4 (RHr, SWa).

Bay-breasted Warbler-- A singing male at HBSP 6/23 was very unusual (RHn, EB, AM). An extremely early fall migrant (a male) was banded at Lksh 7/21 (JP).

Blackpoll Warbler-- Keeping in step with the above, a singing male was at HBSP 6/16 & 23 (EB, RHn, AM).

Cerulean Warbler-- 23 males were tallied at Hinckley MP in June (NBa).

Black-and-white Warbler-- Pairs were found at 4 Lake Co. MPs. At one site, Hogback Ridge MP, young were found (JP).

Am. Redstart-- 12 spring migrants remained at HBSP 6/1 (KM).

Prothonotary Warbler-- Along the Upper Cuyahoga River, 10 broods were produced as part on an on-going nest jar project (DBe, AF). Look for an in-depth discussion of this project in our next issue. Also found at the Findlay Clay Pits, the CVNRA, Mosquito Lk., Klbk, SVWA, Shawnee Lookout MP (Hami), Gilmore Ponds and L. White (Pike).

Worm-eating Warbler-- Four were at Mohican SP 6/21, near the northern edge of their nesting range (LEY). Also reported at Navarre Marsh (Otta) during the period, where it possibly nested (BSBO).

N. Waterthrush-- Lake County sightings include a singing male at Conley Rd. MP; a singing male, with a confirmed nest where young were found, at Girdled Rd. MP; and a pair at HHMP, where a juv. was banded 8/3 (all JP). A single bird was observed along the Upper Cuyahoga River 6/17-7/7 (DBe, AF). Another singing bird was at Mohican SP 6/8-7/6 (MH, LEY). A late spring migrant was at Greenlawn Dam 6/4 (AG).

Louisiana Waterthrush-- A single was

somewhat out of place at OkOp 6/1 (TK).

Kentucky Warbler-- Found at 4 northeastern sites, with no confirmed nestings. 6 were at Mohican SP 6/21 (LEY).

Connecticut Warbler-- 1 was banded at Lksh 6/1 (JP).

Mourning Warbler-- 16 migrants were banded at Lksh 6/1-9 (JP). A singing male was found at Girdled Rd. MP in early July (JP).

Common Yellowthroat-- 40 were singing at Mosquito Lk. 6/20 (DJH).

Wilson's Warbler-- 9 late spring migrants were banded at Lksh 6/1-9 (JP).

Canada Warbler-- At Lksh, 6 migrants were banded 6/1-9 (JP). In Lake Co., birds were found at 6 MPs, with nesting confirmed at Girdled Rd. MP and HHMP (JP). A single was at Mohican SP 6/8-22 (MH, LEY), while 2 were at Conkle's Hollow SNP 6/23 (LG).

Tanagers through Finches

Summer Tanager-- OkOp had its first successful nesting in more than 30 years. Rick Nirschl found the nest just w. of Girdham Rd. 6/23, and a female and juvenile were found in the same area in mid- to late-July (RJ, TK).

Blue Grosbeak-- At least 8 males were found in Adams Co. through 6/29 (RRo, CD, MJK, DO, JF). Two were seen in Gallia Co. 6/2 (M. McConnel fide JH).

Dickcissel-- On 6/23, TK found 62 birds in Henry & Putnam Cos. (59 birds in Putnam Co.), in wheat fields with scattered clumps of thistle, a habitat he considers marginal for the species. 25 birds were at BuCr 6/3 (RHr, SWa). Many singing males were found in Paulding Co. (DMD). The 4 singing birds at KPWA were but a fraction of the 53 seen there last summer (CD, DAC). In the east: nested successfully in Lake Twp. (Star) (BM); 1 + were in Holmes Co. into mid-July (RHe, ESC); & 3 males were at "The Wilds" (Musk) (JM).

South-central reports include 2 males in a Jackson Co. reclaimed surface-mine (JM) and 6 males in n. Ross Co. 6/22 (AG, L. Schultz).

Clay-colored Sparrow-- Amazingly, a nesting pair was discovered at Battelle-Darby Creek MP (Fran) this season, representing Ohio's first nesting attempt for this species (JW, m. obs.). See the article elsewhere in this issue for further details.

Vesper Sparrow-- 29 were tallied in Henry/Putnam Cos. 6/23 (TK).

Lark Sparrow-- In the OkOp, 2 males were in residence along Ostrich Lane, although no successful nests were found (BSBO).

Savannah Sparrow-- Kemp found 30+ in Henry/Putnam Cos. 6/23 and 26 in Fulton Co. 6/25.

Grasshopper Sparrow-- On 6/1, 39 birds were found at a reclaimed strip-mine in Coshocton Co. (CD).

Henslow's Sparrow-- McCormac found "perhaps 100 territorial males" at scattered reclaimed surface-mines in Jackson & Muskingum Cos. 6/26-27. Coshocton Co. had 35 birds 6/1 (CD). Also reported in Adam, Asht, Jeff, Lake, Lick, Tusc, and Wash.

Lincoln's Sparrow-- A late spring migrant was banded at Lksh 6/9 (JP).

Swamp Sparrow-- Egypt Valley WA harbored 20 birds 6/10 (RHr, SWa). Streetsboro Bog held 15 birds 6/16 (CH).

White-throated Sparrow-- Unusual reports include 1 at the Wilderness Center (Star) 6/25 (LC); 1 summering at a Lksh feeder 7/5-30 (JP); and 1 summering at HBSP 6/23-7/14 (EB, RHn, AM, LR).

White-crowned Sparrow-- A singing male was found during the second straight summer at HBSP, being found 6/23-7/14 this year (EB, RHn, AM, LR).

Dark-eyed Junco-- JP reported this species to be present at most suitable Lake Co. locations, being found at 14 different MPs. HHMP alone had 31

singing birds. N. Chagrin MP had 4-5 singing males, with 3 juv. seen 6/16 (KM). Also found at Big Creek MP (DBe) and Holden Arboretum (Geau/Lake) (RRi).

Bobolink-- Frequent on reclaimed surface-mine land in Jackson & Muskingum Cos., with "perhaps 60-80" males seen collectively at scattered sites 6/26-27 (JM). Kemp found 70+ in Henry/Putnam Cos. 6/23.

E. Meadowlark-- On 7/26, 45 were seen in a Holmes Co. hayfield (Esc).

W. Meadowlark-- The only report was of a single bird in Putnam Co. 6/23 (TK).

Yellow-headed Blackbird-- 2 were very unusual at Gilmore Ponds 7/5 (G. Sadler).

Baltimore Oriole-- On 6/17, 30 birds were found in the Ira Rd. area of the s. CVNRA (TMR).

Purple Finch-- Singles were noted at 3 northeastern locations. Two female-plumaged birds (although one was singing) were at Gilmore (Tusc) 6/15 (Esc). 6 were banded at Lksh 6/1-9 (JP).

Red Crossbill-- At least a dozen birds fed for a couple of hours on blooming sunflowers at Elmora (Otta) on the very unusual date of 7/30 (Sharon & Bill Dailey ph., fide MAn).

Pine Siskin-- A singing bird was found at HHMP in early June. Again presumably nested at Lksh, where several young were banded in early June and late July (both JP).

ADDENDA

Ruff-- A male was present at KPWA 4/10-11/96 (E. Lux, V. Fazio* ph., B. Conlon*, W. Shively ph., m. obs.).

Western Tanager-- A male was photographed at Magee 5/16/96. Unfortunately, this second state record only remained for a limited time (D. Freidman*, MA*, G. Beaton*, T. Anderson ph., J. McIntyre, et al.). Nice bird!

Harris' Sparrow-- A bird was

photographed in Defiance Co. in early May 1996. Note that this represents a different bird from the widely-viewed Henry Co. bird, present into Spring 1996 (Paul & Linda Ann Marowell^{*,} ph.).

CONTRIBUTORS AND OBSERVERS

All individuals contributing bird reports to "The Ohio Cardinal" for the Summer 1996 season (June 1 through July 31, 1996) are listed below in CAPITAL LETTERS. In addition, many other Observers submitted sightings to other birding-related publications. For this issue, reports from the following publications have been used: "The Cleveland Bird Calendar" (Kirtland Bird Club); "Dendroica" (Black Swamp Bird Observatory); & "The Toledo Naturalists' Association Bulletin". Those Observers who received at least four citations in the Summer 1996 "The Reports" section are also included in the following list of Contributors: MATT ANDERSON (MA_n); MICHAEL J. ARABIA (MA_r); CAROLE L. BABYAK (CB); Emil Bacik (EB); NICK BARBER (NB_a); LYNN BARNHART (LB); DAN BEST (DB_e) for the Geauga Co. Park District; BLACK SWAMP BIRD OBSERVATORY (BSBO); DAVID A. BRINKMAN (DB_r); NANCY D. BRUNDAGE (NB_r); DWIGHT & ANN CHASAR (DAC); LeROY CURTIS (LC); DAVID C. DISTER (DD); DOUG

& MICKI DUNAKIN (DMD); BOB FINKELSTEIN (BF); JIM FRY (JF); LARRY GARA (LG); ADAM GOLODA (AG); SCOTT HACKETT (SH); Ray Hannikman (RH_n); SHARON LEE HANSE (SLH); BETTY HARDESTY (BH); ROBERT HARLAN (RH_r); JOHN HERMAN (JH); MICHAEL HERSHBERGER (MH); ROBERT HERSHBERGER (RH_e); HANK & SALLY HIRIS (HSH); DAVID & JUDY HOCHADEL (DJH); CRAIG HOLT (CH); RICHARD JOHNSON (RJ); CECE JOHNSTON (CJ); NED KELLER (NK_e); TOM KEMP (TK); NORMAN J. KOTESOVEC, JR. (NK_o); NORMA KRAPS (NK_r); MARIAN & JEFF KRAUS (MK); ANDREW LEEDS (AL); TOM LePAGE (TLP); PAULA J. LOZANO (PL); JIM McCORMAC (JM); KEVIN METCALF (KM); BEN MORRISON (BM); OHIO DIVISION OF WILDLIFE (ODOW); DOUG OVERACKER (DO); JOHN POGACNIK (JP); RICHARD RICKARD (RR_i); TOM & MARY ANNE ROMITO (TMR); LARRY ROSCHE (LR); ROBERT ROYSE (RR_o); ED SCHLABACH (ES_c); EMILY SPRAGUE (ES_p); Jay Stenger (JS); ELLIOT TRAMER (ET); SANDY WAGNER (SW_a); JOHN WATTS (JW); Paul Wharton (PW); STANLEY E. WULCOWICZ (SW_u); LEROY E. YODER (LEY); & MARIAN ZEHNDER (MZ). In addition, many other Observers are cited for 1 to 3 records within the species accounts. Our thanks to all.



Harris's Sparrow. Defiance (Defiance Co.), early May, 1996.
Photo by Paul & Linda Ann Marowellⁱ.

The Grapevine

A Western Tanager at Magee Marsh

[Editor's note: the following account is adapted from documentations provided by Matt Anderson and Darlene Friedman]. At about 7:45 a.m. on May 16, 1996, Darlene Friedman spotted a male Western Tanager amongst the large cottonwoods and willows in the grassy beach area near the eastern end of the Magee Marsh WA Bird Trail (Lucas Co). Before it was last seen heading east past the northern bend of the Crane Creek causeway at about 9:10 a.m., roughly 15 people had observed the bird, and it was photographed by Tom Anderson. It was slightly larger than nearby Baltimore Orioles, but had a heavier, less pointed bill. Its size and shape were similar to a Scarlet Tanager. In general, the plumage appeared to be bright yellow with black wings, tail and back. Each wing had two distinct wingbars, which when seen well, appeared yellowish. The facial area had a distinct orangish-red wash. Although this coloration was obvious when seen well, it was muted, having less red on the head than is pictured in the standard North American field guides. It was much more reminiscent of the male tanager pictured on Plate 67 of Godfrey's The Birds of Canada. The bill was ivory-colored. The tanager was active during the entire observation, flitting rapidly from tree to tree, generally remaining about 25 feet up in the canopy. This represents the second accepted record for Ohio, although several other reports do exist. By Matt Anderson, 12005 Oak River Lane, Whitehouse, OH 43571 and Darlene Friedman, 40944 Morningside, Novi, MI 48375.

A June Big Day

We were a little irritated that some birders from Michigan "sneaked" down to Ohio and claimed a June Big Day record for our fair state. So we decided to remedy the situation with a June 1, 1996 Big Day of our own. Eric Durbin, Greg Links and I ran our regular route, beginning in the Oak Openings and generally ending along Lake Erie, with a brief stop in Wood County. The morning in the sand country was unspectacular but steady, as we found all of the expected birds except Rose-breasted Grosbeak. At 10:45 a.m., as we entered Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, we had 99 species. Five hours later, after visiting Magee Marsh WA, the Magee Bird Trail, and other lakeshore sites, we had 119 species. We added only 20 birds in 5 hours! A mega-doldrum. Our last hope was Metzger Marsh WA, where there just had to be some shorebirds. In fact, if there were no waders there we were ready to pack it in. But Metzger did come through-- the mudflats were extensive and full of birds. In fact, 11 shorebird species were there, including 3 lovely Red Knots, a bird I rarely see. Now we were cooking again and Mallard Club Marsh WA beckoned with the calls of ducks and rails. We got some of each and a calling American Bittern, too. Our total was 142 as we headed back west through Toledo, picking up 6 more birds, including Peregrine Falcon and Dickcissel. The final count was 148, which included 14 shorebirds and 15 warblers, remarkable for the 1st of June. By Tom Kemp, 7021 Manore Rd., Whitehouse, OH 43571. [Editor's note: this article first appeared in The Toledo Naturalists' Association Bulletin, July 1996].

Notes on a Brown Creeper Nest in North Chagrin MP

On the morning of June 30, 1996, while conducting a breeding bird survey, I noticed a Brown Creeper flying to the back side of a dead

willow that stands in an oxbow near the Chagrin River. Within seconds it flew away from the tree, seeming to depart from about the same place that it disappeared. This was not the typical creeper feeding pattern (landing near the bottom of a tree and working up), so I suspected a nest. I decided to watch the site, and within a minute a creeper again flew to the same spot on the willow and left a few seconds later.

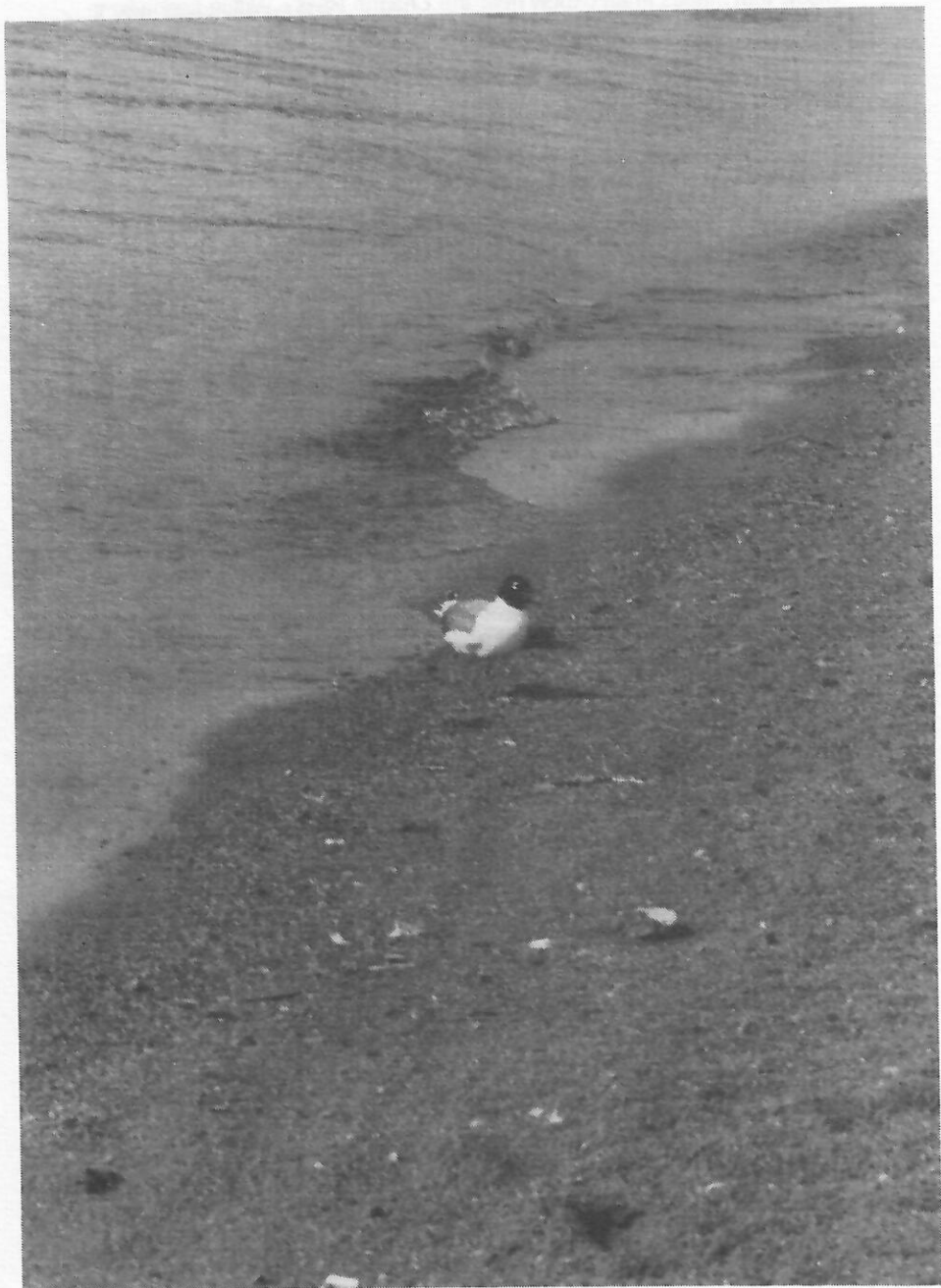
The tree was visited about once a minute, but from my vantage point I could not see where the creeper(s) were going. I bushwhacked my way around to the other side of the oxbow and continued my observations from there. Soon a creeper landed on the tree with food in its bill. It crept up about a foot and quickly ducked behind the edge of a piece of loose bark. With 4-5 seconds the creeper flew out from behind the bark. I watched this repeatedly for the next half-hour (between about 8:40-9:10 a.m.). The nest site was 10-12 feet up on the willow trunk, which was about 1.5-2 feet in diameter. The nest was over standing water.

Around 8:45 a.m. I watched the creeper perform a task that caught me by surprise. As songbirds typically do, one of the creepers left the nest after a feeding, carrying off a fecal sac. What was remarkable was what happened next. The creeper flew directly to a snag that stood about 20 yards northeast of the nest. It proceeded to wipe the fecal sac onto the snag and flew off. It was then that I noticed a whole line of fecal sacs, or remnants of them, plastered to the side of this "fecal post" (about 24 white blobs in all). This had apparently been a routine! The sources that I have read say that birds simply carry away and drop these fecal sacs somewhere, or in some cases, ingest them. This was the first time I have seen or heard of this behavior. On July 4, I noticed one of the parent Brown Creepers again removing a fecal sac and wiping it on a different dead tree. With further searching, I found at least four trees that had numerous fecal sac remnants on them, all near the nest site. One snag had at least 45 of the white blobs. This could be something to look for to help locate an active creeper nest.

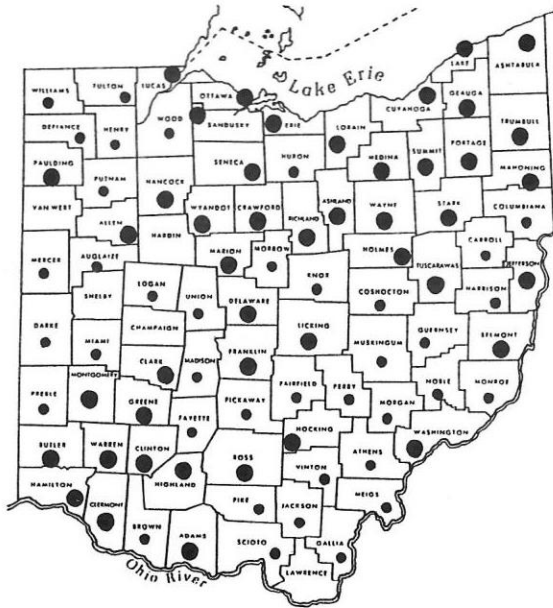
On July 6, I stopped to watch the nest but saw no activity. Since the creepers had been feeding very regularly, and I sat for no more than about five minutes on my other visits without seeing a creeper, the young had probably fledged on July 5. I wish I had seen them leave the nest, as I wonder if they flew away first, or creeped! By Kevin Metcalf, 12459 Fowlers Mill Rd., Chardon, OH 44024.

Field Checklist of the Birds of Ohio

The Ohio Division of Natural Areas and Preserves, in collaboration with the Ohio Bird Records Committee, is pleased to announce the availability of a new checklist of Ohio birds. This checklist includes every species documented as occurring in Ohio, indicates the last year in which rarities were seen, which species have bred in the state, and other useful information. It is also designed for re-use, so that several field trips can be accommodated on a single checklist. The cost is 50 cents per checklist. They can be ordered by mail, but to help offset mailing costs, the minimum order is \$5.00 (10 checklists). Send check or money order (payable to the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves) to-- ODNR, Natural Areas, 1889 Fountain Square Court, Columbus, OH 43224. Please include your name and mailing address. Checklists can also be obtained by coming into ODNR headquarters at Fountain Square. Call (614) 265-6453 for more information.



Adult Franklin's Gull. Caesar Creek SP, 7/31/96.
Photo by Larry Gara.



COUNTIES OF OHIO

County Coverage Map for Volume 19

- = Regular Seasonal Coverage
- = Light Coverage
- (No symbol indicates no coverage)

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