

**A friendly reminder...**

It's time to renew your subscription if this box is checked.

**On the inside...**

Autumn 2002 Overview by Bill Whan .....	1
Autumn 2002 Reports by Bill Whan .....	3
Further Afield by Rob Harlan .....	22
The Hummingbird Invasion of 2002: Issues of Identification by James S. McCormac and Joseph W. Hammond .....	28
Some Thoughts on Big Days by Greg Links .....	40
Ohio's Second Record of Roseate Spoonbill by Lana Hays .....	44
Gannet Invasion in the Great Lakes: The Role of Storms by Greg Miller .....	47
Recent Actions of the Ohio Bird Records Committee by James S. McCormac .....	51

THE OHIO CARDINAL  
2338 HARRINGTON RD.  
AKRON, OH 44319

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT NO. 487  
AKRON, OHIO

The Ohio



CARDINAL™

Vol. 26, No. 1  
Autumn 2002



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

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

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

### Seasonal Report Due Dates

Winter (Dec.-Feb.) - March 25  
Spring (Mar.-May) - June 25  
Summer (June-July) - August 25  
Autumn (Aug.-Nov.) - December 25

### Please send all reports to:

Bill Whan  
223 E. Tulane Rd.  
Columbus, OH 43202  
danielel@iwaynet.net

### Subscriptions

The subscription rate for one year (four issues) is \$20.00. Please send all subscription requests to:

*The Ohio Cardinal*  
c/o Edwin C. Pierce  
2338 Harrington Rd.  
Akron, OH 44319

Because it is sent as bulk mail, subscribers should remember that the Post Office will not forward this magazine to a new address. Please notify the Publisher promptly if you move.

### The Ohio Cardinal

Bill Whan, Editor

Edwin C. Pierce, Publisher

Joseph W. Hammond, Design Manager

The Ohio Bird Records Committee: Jim McCormac, Secretary

ODNR Division of Natural Areas and Preserves

1889 Fountain Square Court

Columbus, OH 43224

ISSN 1534-1666

**On the Cover:** This Calliope hummingbird was photographed in Chillicothe, Ross County, on 30 October 2002 by Bill Bosstic and Joe McMahan.

## Autumn 2002 Overview

### Bill Whan

223 East Tulane Road, Columbus, OH 43202  
danielel@iwaynet.net

This memorable autumn followed the nation's third hottest summer—cooler than only the Dust Bowl years of 1934 and 1936—with an abnormally hot August and September. A cold and windy November with a relentless series of cold fronts closed out the period, and brought some noteworthy rarities, from tiny hummingbirds to looming gannets. During the season a remarkable 301 species were reported in Ohio, a still more remarkable 19 of them review species (two of them regrettably undocumented). One, accepted by the Ohio Bird Records Committee, was new to the state list.

Severe drought in the southeastern states may have sent some waders north, starting our record-breaking quartet of spoonbills. Waterfowl tended to arrive late, and hardly in numbers to brag about, especially divers, but the two eastern eider species put in long stays on the Lake Erie shore, remaining available to birders while miraculously avoiding gunners, law-abiding and otherwise. Shorebirds in decent numbers benefited from three spots on the Lake Erie shore—Conneaut harbor, Sheldon Marsh State Nature Preserve, and the Crane Creek estuary at Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge—still open, however narrowly, to natural fluctuations in Lake levels. In addition, Pickerel Creek Wildlife Area and a couple of spots out in Paulding County's expanse of corn and beans surprised observers with mudflat habitat and some nice records.

Late-lingering ruby-throated hummingbirds perhaps kept nectar feeders out long enough to attract western species in their wanderings, including an astonishing 12 confirmed rufous or rufous/Allen's and our first Calliope. Passerines were mostly reported as disappointing in numbers. Neotropical migrants seemed to have reacted to the notably cold, wet spring (remember all those rose-breasted grosbeaks at feeders when insects were hard to find?) followed by a hot, dry summer with reduced productivity. Early portents for winter finch numbers were dismal but not surprising; we have recently grown used to looking for numbers of these species only in winters that begin in odd-numbered years.

Some alarming reports led to concerns about the effect of the West Nile virus on bird populations. People were led to present more bird corpses to officials, to ascribe all mortalities or transient fluctuations in reported numbers to the virus, and to suppose any effect would be permanent. Among officialdom, mortality among birds demonstrated to harbor the virus was often attributed to the pathogen (rather than pollutants, for example), and spraying to control mosquitoes (apparently not the only vector of the disease) harmed bird populations. Effects on horses and zoo animals were better documented. Facts are much needed. We may learn more about effects on wild bird populations after the upcoming Christmas Bird Counts are completed and carefully analyzed.

The Reports follow the taxonomic order of the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the *AOU Check-list of North American Birds* (1998), including the 42<sup>nd</sup> (July 2000) and 43<sup>rd</sup> (July 2002) Supplements. Underlined names of species indicate those on the OBRC Review List;

documentation is needed to add reports of these species to official state records, or to attributed records in the Reports. When supplied, county names appear *italicized*. Unless numbers are specified, sightings refer to single birds. Abbreviations, conventions, and symbols used in the Reports should be readily understood, with the possible exceptions of the following: BCSP=Buck Creek SP in *Clark*; BIWA=Big Island WA in *Marion*; BSBO=Black Swamp Bird Observatory; CCE= Crane Creek estuary in Ottawa NWR; CPNWRC=monthly census at Cedar Point NWR in *Lucas*; CVNP=Cuyahoga Valley National Park in *Cuyahoga* and *Summit*; Dike 14=the Gordon Park impoundment in Cleveland; EFSP=East Fork SP in *Clermont*; eop=end of the period, in this case 30 Nov 2002; EHSP=East Harbor SP in *Ottawa*; fide="in trust of," said of data conveyed on behalf of another person; GLSM=Grand Lake St. Marys in *Mercer* and *Auglaize*, HBSP=Headlands Beach SP in *Lake*; HBSNP=Headlands Beach SNP in *Lake*; Killbuck=Killbuck Marsh WA in *Wayne* and *Holmes*; KPWA=Killdeer Plains WA in *Wyandot*; LSR=Lakeshore Reservation (MP) in *Lake*; Magee=Magee Marsh WA in *Ottawa* and *Lucas*; MBSP=Maumee Bay SP in *Lucas*; MP=Metropark; m obs=many observers; MWW=Miami-Whitewater Wetlands in *Hamilton*; NWR=National Wildlife Refuge; OBRC=Ohio Bird Records Committee; ODOV=Ohio Division of Wildlife; ONWR=Ottawa NWR in *Ottawa* and *Lucas*; ONWRC=monthly bird census at Ottawa NWR; PCWA=Pickerel Ck WA in *Sandusky*; ph=photograph; Res=Reservoir; Res'n=Reservation; SF=State Forest; SNP=State Nature Preserve; SP=State Park; SVWA=Spring Valley WA in *Greene* and *Warren*; WA=Wildlife Area.

### Corrigenda

The little blue heron of 20 Jul 2002 was not found in *Montgomery*, but the observers could not be reached to determine whether it was in *Greene*, *Warren*, or *Butler*. The daily number of purple finches reported this summer in *Mahoning* was 1-2.

### For the Record

Here are noteworthy reports from earlier dates in 2002 (except where otherwise noted) that for one reason or another escaped our notice:

**Northern Harrier:** One was at Woodbury WA in *Coshocton* on 15 Jun (A. Yoder).

**Sora:** An adult and chick were noted in a marsh in *Ashland* 6 Jun (B. Burnett).


**Willet:** J. Lehman had one at the renowned shorebird Mecca of Crown City WA, *Lawrence/Gallia*, on 13 Jul.

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** Very early to return, and perhaps a failed breeder, was a female at Fairport Hbr on 29 Jun (R. Hannikman).

**Blue-headed Vireo:** One was quite early on 1 Apr in Shawnee SF this year (B. Roysse).

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** An "Audubon's" was at Magee 27 Apr (J. Sawvel).

**Bay-breasted Warbler:** J. Grabmeier had a singing male in Columbus 17 Jun.

**Smith's Longspur:** E. A. Yoder reported a bird seen 2-3 Apr 2000 on his farm in *Wayne* that, while he acknowledged the details are not wholly satisfactory, strongly suggested this species. The date is right, but it would be a first record for the region. We hope *Cardinal* readers will review the features on this species in the Spring issue, and conduct some intensive searches for Smith's in late Mar and early Apr this spring. 

## Autumn 2002 Reports

### Bill Whan

223 East Tulane Road, Columbus, OH 43202

danielel@iwaynet.net

**Red-throated Loon:** First noted 20 Oct at LSR, with another 24 Nov (both J. Pogacnik). One was off Kelleys Isl 16 Nov (T. Bartlett), and four there 23 Nov (Bartlett fide V. Fazio), while Pogacnik had another off MBSP on 28 Nov. Inland, birds were at Delaware Res 4 Nov (B. Shively) and Lk Lemon, *Hamilton*, 9 Nov (N. Keller).

**Common Loon:** 2600+ reported. A local record early bird on 20 Sep in *Paulding* (D&M Dunakin) might have been summering elsewhere nearby; certainly one at KPWA on 3 Aug was doing so (B. Foppe). Other inland sites had big numbers in mid-Nov: 184 at Clear Fk Res (J. Herman) the 16<sup>th</sup>; 170+ at Hoover Res (R. Thorn) the 17<sup>th</sup>; 496 over *Holmes* (E. A. Yoder) the 18<sup>th</sup>; and 768 over Parma Hts (S. Zadar) the 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Pied-billed Grebe:** Bred sparsely. High count 31 at Metzger Marsh WA 14 Sep (R. Harlan, S. Wagner). Three remained at Seneca Lk, *Noble*, 26 Nov (B. Glick).

**Horned Grebe:** Scanty this fall statewide, the most noteworthy number by far 117 off Kelleys Isl 24 Nov (V. Fazio).

**Red-necked Grebe:** Most along Lk Erie: Cleveland 2-5 Nov (S. Zadar), Rocky River 9 Nov (R. Rogers), and Eastlake 10 Nov (C. Spagnoli). Inland, a likely first record for *Richland* was one 26 Nov (J. Herman) to 29 Nov (S. Snyder) at Clear Fk Res.

**Eared Grebe:** J. Pogacnik had one at Conneaut 28 Sep, and G. Miller birds at Rocky River Pk 14 Nov and Fairport Hbr 26 Nov. Reports came from 20 Nov in Cleveland (S. Zadar) and 29 Nov in Mentor, *Lake* (G. Leidy).

**Northern Gannet:** A great year for gannets began 16 Nov, with a first-fall bird at Rocky River Pk (K. Metcalf, m obs). Accepted by the OBRC. Another went undocumented.

**Brown Pelican:** Nine reports, most of them second-hand (fide A. Wormington), emerged of what was probably a single imm bird ranging between the Lk Erie Islands and Maumee Bay. They spanned the period from 9 Jun (P. Froehlich) to 23 Sep (crew of S. Bass Isl ferry fide N. Bixler). R. Duktig photographed an imm off Toledo 22 Aug. Accepted by the OBRC.

**Double-crested Cormorant:** Counts of 25,600+ on 28 Sep (CPNWRC) and 22,000+ there 10 Oct (J. McCormac) exceed all others previous. Good inland numbers were 220 at Hoover Res 21 Oct (R. Thorn), 250-300 in Cincinnati 28 Oct (D. Brinkman), and 258 at Findlay Res 29 Oct. One was at EFSP as late as 28 Nov (D. Morse).

**American Bittern:** One possible breeder was spotted by D. Overacker at PCWA 3 Aug. All others were probable migrants in a short Oct span: the 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> at N. Chagrin Res'n (K. Metcalf), the 10<sup>th</sup> at Magee (J. McCormac), and the 13<sup>th</sup> at Gilmore Ponds, *Butler* (D. Brinkman).

**Least Bittern:** Sparsely reported, with a late one 13 Oct at ONWR (J&M Kraus, ph).

**Great Egret:** V. Fazio tallied 440+ in three *Erie* locations 30 Aug, and 395 crowded Medusa Marsh 12 Sep (B. Whan). Inland, 16 were at Dillon Res 5 Aug (M. Bowman), 27 at BIWA 13 Aug (J. Hammond), a local record 60 on 23 Aug at Gilmore Ponds (M. Busam), and 23 on 8 Sep in *Mahoning* (B. Jones). The 3 Nov ONWRC had 44, and the last report came from 5 Nov at Sheldon Marsh (G. Leidy).



**Snowy Egret:** All over the place. Medusa Marsh had 13 on 3 Aug (**J. Hammond**), ONWRC 19 on 4 Aug, Gilmore a juv 18 Aug (**M. Busam**), Berlin Res one 18 Aug-16 Sep (**B. Morrison**), one with the spoonbills in *Highland* 28 Aug (**G. Miller**), five at PCWA 29 Aug (**G. Leidy**), six in *Wood* along the Maumee R 31 Aug (**G. Links**), three at BIWA on 2 Sep (**R. Harlan, S. Wagner**), and one in *Brown* 8 Sep (**C&S Clingman**).

**Little Blue Heron:** Three juveniles at Gilmore Ponds, *Butler*, 3 Aug ended with one 28 Aug (**M. Busam**); in between, **S. Reeves** found six there 19 Aug. One was at Medusa 7 Aug (**G. Miller**), and another at Berlin Res 21-27 Aug (**B. Morrison**).

**Cattle Egret:** Having abandoned W. Sister Isl in favor of Turning Pt Isl for nesting, 21 were seen s. of Sandusky 3 Aug (**J. Hammond**), and ~30 there the last week of the month (**S. Young**); the ONWRC by contrast had none 4 Aug, one 1 Sep, and one 6 Oct.

**Green Heron:** Not numerous. The high count was 12+ at Stillfork Swamp in *Carroll* 2 Aug (**L. Dornan**); 10 were at N. Chagrin Res'n 16 Nov (**K. Metcalf**).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Widespread in small numbers, the largest 10 at Gilmore Ponds 10 Aug (**S. Pawlowski**). As for odd appearances, one was in *Scioto* 6 Aug (**B. Master**), and an imm at KPWA 27 Nov (**T. Archdeacon**).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** **S. Crawford** photographed one at Killbuck 4 Aug; **R. Thorn** had a first-year bird at Greenlawn Dam in Columbus 1 Sep.

**Plegadis Ibis sp.:** One was at Conneaut 25 Aug (**A. Fondrk** et al.). An imm bird at KPWA 29 Aug (**K. Miller** *fide* **G. Miller**) through 2 Sept (**R. Harlan, S. Wagner**) was seen by many. **J. Pogacnik** had a flyby at Medusa Marsh 21 Sep, and **J. Yochum** one on the ground in *Williams* the 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Roseate Spoonbill:** Four imm birds were first confirmed 20 Jul at Rocky Fork SP in *Highland* (**J. Holbrook**); the last remained 20 Oct (**A. Scheidler**). A witness stated the birds had been present since late May, but this could not be confirmed; in any event, their prolonged stay set a record for this latitude. See article this issue. Accepted by the OBRC.

**Black Vulture:** Few reports. Only three were noted in the Granville roost 21 Nov (**J. Estep**), and 12 in *Brown* 8 Sept (**S. Clingman**); fully 30-40, though, were up at Lk Buckhorn, *Holmes*, 17 Nov (**B. Glick**).

**Turkey Vulture:** A staggering 600+ passed over Maumee, *Lucas*, 23 Oct (**S. Stockman**). On 10 Nov 225 overflowed Cowan Lk SP (**E. Roush**) and 17 Nov 195+ were at Lk Buckhorn (**B. Glick**). One remained in *Lucas* at the eop (**E. Tramer**).

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** **D. St. John** (*fide* **V. Fazio**) reported 31 near Newark, *Licking*, 25 Nov for the season's sole report.

**Snow Goose:** First noted at ONWR 13 Oct (**M&J Kraus**), where 30 remained at the eop (**D. Dister**). Interesting numbers away from the Lake included 85+ inland in *Lucas* 2 Nov (**M. Anderson**), 35+ over KPWA 10 Nov (**G. Rettig**), 18 at a *Holmes* farm pond 11 Nov (**P. Boyd** *fide* **M. Hershberger**), 15 in *Holmes* 18 Nov (**B. Glick**), and 25 in *Clermont* 24 Nov (**M. Wessel**). Reported color morphs were 70-80% 'blue' geese.

**Canada Goose:** True migrants from the imperiled *B. c. interior* race showed up at N. Chagrin Res'n, *Cuyahoga*, on 17 Sept (**K. Metcalf**), during the early goose season designed to thin our herds of semi-domesticated resident *B. c. maxima*.

**Brant:** All reports came from Conneaut Hbr: 22 on 7 Oct (**G. Meszaros**), 11 on 14 Oct (**D. Sanders** *fide* **P. Gardner**), and two 17 Nov (**S. Butcher** et al.).

**Mute Swan:** **V. Fazio** had 23 at Medusa Marsh and an ominous 106 at EHSP 15 Nov.

**Tundra Swan:** About 1500 reported along the Lake shore. Inland, 21 were over *Holmes* 23 Nov (**E. Schlabach**), and 84 at Berlin Res 26 Nov and 12 at neighboring Walborn Res 29 Nov (both **B&D Lane**). The ONWRC had 464 on 3 Nov, and **H&S Hiris** 135 at Magee 17 Nov.

**Wood Duck:** One KPWA pond had 168+ by 8 Aug (**B. Whan**), and **H&S Hiris** counted 234 at Magee 16 Sep and 345 on 17 Nov. **J. McCormac** tallied 600+ at CPNWR 10 Oct.

**Gadwall:** One on the 4 Aug ONWRC and 13 at Magee 18 Aug (**H&S Hiris**) may have summered; one 11 Aug at Winton Wds, *Hamilton*, is a mystery (**N. Cade**). Numbers swelled in Oct, with 550-600 at CPNWR the 10<sup>th</sup> (**J. McCormac**) and 796 there by 16 Nov (CPNWR). A Lk Rockwell record was 350 on 9 Nov (**L. Rosche**). 950 were at Medusa Marsh 15 Nov (**V. Fazio**). Eight were at West Branch Res 27 Nov (**L. Dornan**).

**American Wigeon:** No surprising numbers, with the high 480+ at Medusa Marsh, a favored spot, 15 Nov (**V. Fazio**). First were 10+ at the CCE 7 Sep (**J. Hammond**).

**American Black Duck:** ODOW aerial surveyors reported them in "good numbers" offshore, but elsewhere numbers resembled those of the ONWRC: 13 on 4 Aug, four on 11 Sep, 32 on 6 Oct, and 98 on 3 Nov. **V. Fazio** did have 270+ at Medusa Marsh 15 Nov.

**Mallard:** Aerial surveys detected far more, but the high count in areas accessible on land was 3500 for the 3 Nov ONWRC.

**Blue-winged Teal:** Numbers were far down by all accounts, with one triple-digit report, of 137 for the 6 Oct ONWRC. One remained for the 3 Nov ONWRC in a cold season.



Conneaut Harbor in Ashtabula County produced decent numbers of brant this season. The birds in this photo were part of a flock of 22 present on 7 October 2002. Photo by Gary Meszaros.



**Northern Shoveler:** Remarkable was an adult with three young at BIWA 3 Aug (**B. Foppe**), where **J. Hammond** found two birds 13 Aug. **Hammond** had two hens at Pipe Ck WA 3 Aug. Good numbers were found later, with 63 on the 3 Nov ONWRC, 103 at KPWA 15 Nov (**M. England**), and 230 at Magee 17 Nov (**H&S Hiris**).

**Northern Pintail:** A drake was at Medusa 1 Aug (**G. Miller**). Very scanty numbers were seen inland, and the two largest numbers near the Lake were 400+ at ONWR 8 Nov (**V. Fazio**) and 288 at Magee 17 Nov (**H&S Hiris**).

**Green-winged Teal:** Twelve had arrived for the 4 Aug ONWRC, and by that of 6 Oct 2578 were found, with 286 remaining in the area for the 16 Nov CPNWRC, and 330+ the day before at Medusa (**V. Fazio**). At Sandy Ridge MP in *Lorain*, 65 remained for **R. Harlan** and **S. Wagner** on the 25<sup>th</sup> of a very cold Nov.

**Canvasback:** Divers were way down, so to speak, with the earliest birds 27 Oct, 40 passing over *Lucas* (**M. Anderson**). Max 221 off LSR 16 Nov (**J. Pogacnik**).

**Redhead:** Early was one in *Paulding* 22 Sep (**M&D Dunakin**). Reported flocks never reached three figures during the period.

**Ring-necked Duck:** A hen was in *Hamilton* 11 Aug (**N. Cade**), but substantial numbers came in Nov, with 450 in *Shalersville Twp, Portage*, the 9<sup>th</sup> (**L. Rosche**), and 630 for the CPNWRC of the 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Greater Scaup:** First to appear were 14 at HBSP 30 Oct (**L. Rosche**), and with scaups at a low ebb this year numbers didn't get much higher. Fifteen at Camp Dennison in *Hamilton* 23 Nov (**J. Stenger**) was a good inland count.

**Lesser Scaup:** Skimpy. ODOW aerial surveys revealed ~20% of normal numbers. First report was 16 Oct near *Wilmington* (**L. Gara**), and the high count was 317 off LSR 17 Nov (**J. Pogacnik**). None was found on the 3 Nov ONWRC.

**King Eider:** Not seen for more than four years, one was reported at *Conneaut* 2 Nov and perhaps thereafter, and an imm male in *Mentor, Lake*, 27 Nov-eop (**N. Barber**, m obs, ph) was accepted by the OBRC.

**Common Eider:** An imm female found at *Fairport Hbr* 3 Nov (**H. Petruschke** et al., m obs, ph) seemed to disappear from 10-24 Nov, but later remained for m obs through the eop. Accepted by the OBRC as Ohio's second record.

**Harlequin Duck:** **J. Pogacnik** noted imm males at LSR 2 and 17 Nov. **S. Zadar** reported a female at *Dike* 14 on 2 Nov.

**Surf Scoter:** 150+ birds, beginning with three 5 Oct at LSR (**J. Pogacnik**). Persisted from 17 Oct (three birds, **P. Lozano**) through the eop at *Rocky River Pk*, with high count of 70-75 on 2 Nov (**Lozano**); as with other scoters, more remarkable than numbers (we had ~300 surfs in '92, 286 in '98) was their lengthy stay at this site, and the 13 counties reporting at least a few. **J. Hammond** notes that this scoter sp. had the only adult male he saw this fall—one, at *Rocky River*.



The second state record of common eider was one first seen at *Fairport Harbor* in *Lake County* on 3 November 2002, and remaining through the end of the period. Digiscoped photo by **Joe Hammond** on 4 November 2002.

**White-winged Scoter:** 35+ birds, from eight counties, with a high of 16 at *Rocky River Pk* 5 Nov (**B. Conlon**), where the season's first appeared 21 Oct (**P. Lozano**) and several stayed through the eop. The largest fall number since pre-zebra mussel 1987, when 66 birds were reported statewide.

**Black Scoter:** ~200 birds, from nine counties, dominated by a high count of ~80 at *Rocky River Pk* 8 Nov (**P. McSweeney**), where present through the eop. Earlier, 161 reported in 2001 and 71 in 2000. The highest reported numbers since 1987 (with 241).

**Long-tailed Duck:** A 27 Oct sighting for the CPNWRC was a record local early date. Reports of ~40 birds were excellent, even including a flock of 18 on 6 Nov at *Clear Fk Res* that had grown to 25 the following day (**J. Herman**)—a record local number.

**Bufflehead:** Appearing first as a duo at LSR 27 Oct (**J. Pogacnik**), their numbers swelled to a state record 2285 off *Kelleys Isl* 16 Nov (**T. Bartlett**). Good inland numbers included 250+ at *Guilford Lk* in *Columbiana* (**B&D Lane**) and 151 at *Pleasant Hill Lk* and 121 at *Clear Fk Res* (both **S. Snyder**), all on that same day of 16 Nov.

**Common Goldeneye:** Late and scarce, at least from shore. The first report, of 2 females, came from *Eastlake* 10 Nov (**L. Rosche**), and the season's high count reached 220+ at *Kelleys Isl* by 24 Nov (**V. Fazio**).

**Hooded Merganser:** Few early reports, with one 10 Aug at *MWW* (**N. Cade**). *Hoover Res* featured remarkable numbers, with 65+ on 28 Oct (**R. Thorn**), 250 on 14 Nov (**J. Kuenzli**), and 790 on 17 Nov (**Thorn**). **B. Glick** had 280 at *Seneca Lk, Noble*, 26 Nov.

**Common Merganser:** **R. Thorn** was surprised to find an eclipse-plumaged drake at *Alum Ck Res, Delaware*, 21 Aug. Many arrived late, including the high count for the season: 60 at *Lk Rockwell* 23 Nov (**L. Rosche**).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** Earlyish was one at *Conneaut* 23 Sep (**B. Royse**). Appeared in customary—i.e., huge—numbers through the period, with the highest estimate 20,000 at *Eastlake* 21 Nov (**G. Meszaros**).

**Ruddy Duck:** A drake was at *Medusa* 1 Aug (**G. Miller**), a hen with four young at *BIWA* 3 Aug (**B. Foppe**), and one at *ONWR* for the 4 Aug census. Migrants appeared in numbers 22 Sep at *CPNWR* with ~30 (**J. Hammond**); 1200+ were at *Mogadore Res, Portage*, by 20 Oct (**L. Rosche**), 1500-2000 on *Sandusky Bay* 27 Oct (**B. Cullen**), 433 on *Lk Medina* 31 Oct (**S. Zadar**), and ~650 at *Metzger Res* in *Lima* 1 Nov (**D. Sanders**). One remained in *Fairport Hbr* 29 Nov (**L. Dornan**).



All three scoter species were unusually reliable along the *Lake Erie* shore this season. This white-winged scoter was digiscoped at *Fairport Harbor* in *Lake County* on 24 November 2002 by **Joe Hammond**.



This long-tailed duck entertained many at the *Eastlake power plant* in *Lake County* this season. Digiscoped photo by **Joe Hammond** on 9 November 2002.

**Osprey:** Fairly widely reported (18 counties) through the period. The ODOW reintroduction program produced 19 nests and 29 hatchlings; these birds seem to arrive early and leave late by historical standards, as there were three Nov sightings: the 1<sup>st</sup> in *Pickaway* (B. Whan), the 24<sup>th</sup> in *Washington* (B. Thompson, ph), and the 30<sup>th</sup> at E. Branch Res in *Geauga* (B&S Kovanes fide D. Best).

**Bald Eagle:** Reported frequently statewide, with fewest in southern unglaciated areas away from the Ohio River; notable were seven (two ad and five imm) at Seneca Lk, *Noble*, on 26 Nov (B. Glick), for example.

**Northern Harrier:** No verified nests, but birds at suspicious times included *Pickaway* 6 Aug (B. Master), 10 Aug at MWW (N. Cade), 11 Aug BIWA and two BCSP (D. Overacker), imm PCWA 12 Aug (M. Busam), 13 Aug BIWA (J. Hammond), imm 16 Aug *Muskingum* (J. Larson), *Huron* 17 Aug (R. Harlan, S. Wagner), imm 18 Aug MWW (N. Keller), 20 Aug *Hancock* (B. Hardesty), 22 Aug PCWA (B. Barchus), female *Geauga* 23 Aug (B. Faber fide D. Best), female 26 Aug KPWA (R. Sempier), 2 Sep Killbuck WA (Harlan, Wagner).

**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** The high count was four, at Kelleys Isl 28 Sep (K. Metcalf).

**Northern Goshawk:** An adult was over Oak Openings MP in Toledo 28 Oct (J. Hammond et al.).

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** High count was 21 overhead in *Lucas* 27 Oct (M. Anderson).

**Broad-winged Hawk:** S. Stockford was privileged to witness ~15-20,000 overhead in Perrysburg, *Wood*, over 1-1 1/2 hours 18 Sep (a new Ohio high count), then 8-10,000 there, probably part of the previous day's hordes, the following day. M. Anderson saw 1054 rise from roosts there on 19 Sep, then later 241 on 22 Sep and 93 on 23 Sep in *Lucas*. Farther south, D. Overacker counted 35 in Springfield, *Clark*, 22 Sep.

**Red-tailed Hawk:** D. Minney and J. McCormac found an "almost completely white individual" in *Scioto* 24 Sep.

**Rough-legged Hawk:** Normal to less-than-normal numbers at the usual places, with the first report coming from Sheldon Marsh SNP 2 Nov (B. Royse).

**Golden Eagle:** One report, two 23 Oct over Maumee, *Lucas* (S. Stockford).

**Merlin:** Over 25 merlins reported, from mid-Sep to a first local record at EFSP 24 Nov (H. Armstrong). Interesting was a pair of adults hunting 14 Oct on D&J Hochadel's property in *Trumbull*. Merlins seem to have rebounded just as well from former pesticide poisonings as peregrines, despite lack of intensive management by *Homo sapiens*.

**Peregrine Falcon:** Around 40 birds reported, the high count three probable locals in Cleveland 29 Nov (L. Rosche).

**Ruffed Grouse:** One in Chilo, *Clermont*, 23 Oct was pretty far west (S. Clingman).

**Yellow Rail:** On 7 Oct R. Schlabach et al. captured and photographed a juv bird in a *Tuscarawas* alfalfa field. Details are with the OBRC.

**Sora:** Still vocal in fall, birds were detected as late as 5 Oct at Sandy Ridge MP (B. Conlon) and N. Chagrin Res'n 13 Oct (K. Metcalf).

**Common Moorhen:** Sparsely reported, mostly at ONWR, where the census had five 4 Aug, nine 1 Sep, and three 6 Oct.



This yellow rail was discovered in a *Tuscarawas* County alfalfa field on 7 October 2002. Photo by Bruce Glick on that date.

**American Coot:** Young were seen at BIWA 13 Aug (J. Hammond), at Gilmore Ponds 17 Aug (M. Busam), and on the ONWRs of 4 Aug (431 birds), 1 Sep (980 birds), 6 Oct (998 birds), and 3 Nov (705 birds). The high count was 1518 on the 20 Oct census of Magee Marsh (H&S Hiris).

**Sandhill Crane:** Over 800 reported, nearly all between mid-Nov and the eop, and in the western third of the state. Two were in s. *Mahoning* 6 Aug (B. Jones). The *Geauga* birds peaked at four s. of Burton 27 Oct (D. Ferris). The two Sandy Ridge MP birds continued to intrigue observers despite the fact they are anything but wild.

**Black-bellied Plover:** Nearly all reports came from near Lk Erie, and spanned the period through 3 Nov, when the high count of 65 was made at the CCE by the ONWRC. The first juv were two reported quite early at Conneaut 23 Sep (B. Royse).

**American Golden-Plover:** Fewer than 150 reported, dominated by 70 near Paulding 16 Sep (M&D Dunakin); nine were at Alum Ck Res 2 Sep (J. Fuller), ~20 were in s. *Mahoning* 9 Sep (B. Jones), five at Hoover Res 16 Sep (R. Thorn), and 12 at BCSP 12 Oct (D. Overacker), plus four others inland. Late were three at the CCE 3 Nov (ONWRC).

**Semipalmated Plover:** In normal numbers, with a high of ~100 at the CCE 4 Sep (G. Miller); the last reported were three at Conneaut 20 Oct (B. Royse).

**Piping Plover:** Two welcome reports: one 16 Aug at BCSP (D. Overacker, ph T. Shively), accepted by the OBRC, and another 26 Aug at KPWA, in recirculation.

**Killdeer:** Big numbers included 600 at Berlin Res 27 Aug (B. Morrison). By 17 Nov 60-75 could still be found at Hoover Res (R. Thorn).

**American Avocet:** Forty-plus reported were dominated by a flock of 26 at Sandy Ridge MP 14 Sep (C. Grame fide D. LeGallee). Six were at Conneaut 15 Nov (N. Brearton), and inland two basic birds were in *Butler* 20 Oct (J. Brown) and another, the season's last, at Alum Ck Res, *Delaware* 18 (R. Thorn) through 19 (G. Miller) Nov.

**Greater Yellowlegs:** Present through the period to at least 24 Nov (Cowan Lk SP, E. Roush). A good inland count was 25 at KPWA 3 Aug (R. Sempier).

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** Persisted through 2 Nov at Metzger Marsh (B. Royse), with high counts of 270+ at PCWA (V. Fazio) and 104 inland at Berlin Res 23 Sep (B. Morrison).

**Solitary Sandpiper:** High count 26 at Berlin Res 18 Aug (B. Morrison), with three reports of late birds: seven 6 Oct at Gilmore Ponds (M. Busam), one at KPWA 17 Oct (B. Shively), and one 19-22 Oct in *Holmes* (E. A. Yoder).

**Willet:** More than a dozen reported, spanning a brief period 15 Aug-2 Sep, with a high of five at Conneaut 16 Aug (B. Royse). A small alternate-plumaged bird at PCWA (15 Aug M&J Kraus, ph 17 Aug P. Gardner) was apparently of the eastern race *semipalmatus*, recorded only in 1952 in Ohio (and only once before in the interior US), with extensive rich brown streaking beneath. Unusual was a bird at W. Branch Res, *Portage*, 15 Aug (L. Dornan) and another at Beach City Dam in *Tuscarawas* 17 Aug (E. Schlabach).



Piping plovers have become quite rare in the Great Lakes region of late. This one turned up at Buck Creek State Park in Clark County on 16 August 2002. Photo by Troy Shively on that date.

**Spotted Sandpiper:** High count was 34 at Berlin Res 18 Aug (**B. Morrison**), and the final report came from EFSP 12 Oct (**B. Stanley**).

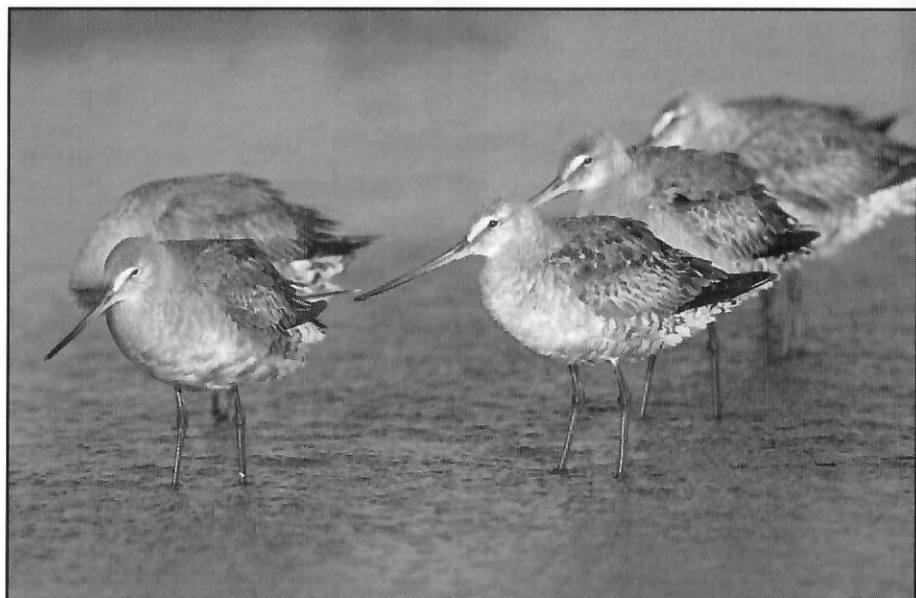
**Upland Sandpiper:** Sparsely reported, first from 3 Aug at KPWA (**J. Hammond**), with a high of only three, at the VOA site in *Butler* 24 Aug (**D. Graham**).

**Whimbrel:** All reports: 3 Aug at PCWA (**D. Overacker**) and Conneaut (**K. Metcalf**), Conneaut 16 Aug (**B. Royse**) and two there 28 Aug (**G. Leidy**), one at PCWA 28 Aug (**Leidy**), and one at Conneaut 2 Sep (**J. Brumfield**).

**Hudsonian Godwit:** More than 40 in 15 reports overall. Two were at the CCE 4 Aug for the ONWRC, then four 6 Oct, and a molting adult was at Conneaut 16 Aug (**J. Hammond**), with two adults reported the same day there by **B. Royse**. The high count was 14 at Conneaut 2 Sep (**G. Meszaros**), and last were 'several' at the CCE 2 Nov (**Royse**).



Pickerel Creek Wildlife Area in Sandusky County hosted a number of shorebirds this season, including this apparent "eastern" willet. Documented records of this subspecies are extremely rare away from the east coast. Digiscoped photo by Paul Gardner on 17 August 2002.



Fourteen Hudsonian godwits at Conneaut Harbor in Ashtabula County on 2 September 2002 represented the high count this season. These five birds were part of that group. Photo by Gary Meszaros.

**Marbled Godwit:** All reports: a bird at KPWA 3 Aug (**R. Sempier**) was seen through 10 Aug (**L. Gara**). One at the CCE 15 Sep (**D. Sanders**) was seen through the 20<sup>th</sup> (**J. Pogacnik**). Another was at Berlin Res 24 Oct (**B. Morrison**).

**Ruddy Turnstone:** Only a few. Among 12 reported, the only one inland, 22 Aug at Hoover Res (**R. Thorn**), was also the latest.

**Red Knot:** Reports from seven sites, with a total of probably 15 birds, the earliest 21 Aug at Conneaut (**T. Shively**), the latest—and high count—six juv at CPNWR 22 Sep (**G. Links**).

**Sanderling:** Numbers much reduced from last fall, with a high count of only 34 at HBSP 11 Sep (**K. Metcalf**). Inland high was 18 at Berlin Res 20 Sep (**B. Morrison**). Last report of the period came from 23 Nov at Lorain (**G. Leidy**).

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** **V. Fazio** counted 660+ ad at PCWA 2 Aug; by 10 Aug one juv was among 90 birds there (**G. Miller**), where on 16 Aug ~40% of 93 birds were juvs (**Fazio**). Last report: two 23 Oct in *Summit* (**E. Snively**).

**Western Sandpiper:** Reports of 23 birds, with six juv in *Delaware* as late as 11 Nov (**J. McCormac** et al.). Other inland birds were singletons in *Paulding* 24 and 26 Aug (**D&M Dunakin**), *Stark* 1 Sep (**B. Morrison**), and *Wood* 7 Sep (**B. Cullen**).

**Least Sandpiper:** High count was ~200 at the CCE 4 Sep (**G. Miller**), and last report two at BCSP 15 Nov (**D. Overacker**). **B. Master** sought them out in far-flung locales, finding three in *Van Wert* 4 Aug and three in *Lawrence* 6 Aug.

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** High count was seven at Berlin Res 5 Sept (**B. Morrison**). One was near Killbuck 26 Oct (**S. Snyder**), and another quite late 17 Nov at Conneaut (**S. Butcher** et al.).

**Baird's Sandpiper:** An ad was a nice find at PCWA 2 Aug (**V. Fazio**). Numbers reached 12+ at Conneaut 26 Aug for **B. Royse**, who also found the latest 2 Nov at EHSP.

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** The high count came inland in *Paulding*—~200 on 7 Aug (**M&D Dunakin**). A straggler was at Meadowbrook Lk, *Ottawa*, 15 Nov for **V. Fazio**.

**Purple Sandpiper:** Fourteen reported *in toto*, all 16-18 Nov—including four at Conneaut 17 Nov (**S. Butcher** et al.)—except for two at HBSP 30 Nov (**T. Shively**).

**Dunlin:** Legion, and season-long, with three for the 4 Aug ONWRC; one in alt plumage landed in PCWA 23 Aug (**S. Zadar**). Peaked 3 Nov, with ~4500 for the ONWRC among our highest recorded fall counts, and ~2600 at Sheldon Marsh 5 Nov (**G. Leidy**).

**Stilt Sandpiper:** **V. Fazio** counted 116 adults at PCWA 2 Aug, and **J. Larson** the first juv, in *Muskingum* 14 Sep. Inland high was 26 at Berlin Res 23 Sep (**B. Morrison**), and the latest were four for the 3 Nov ONWRC.

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** Twenty-two reported, all between 22 Aug (PCWA, **B. Bowman**) and 14 Sep (LaDue Res by **J. Pogacnik**, Alum Ck Res by **R. Thorn**, two at Hoover Res by **L. Gara**).

**Ruff:** A reeve found 25 Jul at PCWA persisted for m obs through 5 Aug (**B. Royse**).

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** At PCWA 100+ adults were present 2 Aug for **J. Hammond**, who also reported the first juv at Conneaut 16 Aug. Inland high was 16 at Buckeye Lk (**G. Buckley**) 16 Aug, and two brought up the rear at Alum Ck Res 17 Sep (**G. Miller**).

**Long-billed Dowitcher:** Three were calling in *Paulding* 15 Aug (**D&M Dunakin**). Three ad at the CCE 17 Aug were in active molt (**B. Whan**), as were nine of 10 in *Paulding* 19 Aug (**Dunakins**). **G. Leidy** et al. observed a very early juv at PCWA 28 Aug. One called in *Holmes* 30 Sep (**E. Schlabach**), one stayed at MWW 15 (**N. Cade**)-27 Oct (**S. Reeves**), and six were at GLSM 5 Oct (**D. Dister**). At the CCE, 300 were tallied by the ONWRC of 3 Nov. Interesting were five reported at KPWA 12 Oct and 9 Nov, the late date, by **R. Sempier**.



**Wilson's Snipe:** Good numbers included 14 at Mosquito Ck Res 5 Sep (G. Miller), 43 near Killbuck 16 Oct and 135 19 Oct (S. Snyder), and 34 in Huron 18 Oct (D. Sanders). Three were at Cowan Lk SP, Clinton, 24 Nov (E. Roush).

**American Woodcock:** One persisted till 16 Nov in e. Holmes (M. Hershberger).

**Wilson's Phalarope:** Thirty or more reported, from Sandusky, Paulding, Lucas, Williams, and Erie. Birds at PCWA 1-23 Aug peaked at seven the 22<sup>nd</sup> (B. Barchus). Four first basic birds at the CCE 17 Aug (V. Fazio) remained 23 Aug (G. Leidy). High count was 10 on the 1 Sep ONWRC.

**Red-necked Phalarope:** All reports: 10 Aug CCE (S. Corbo), 18 Aug Berlin Res (B. Morrison), 20 Aug Paulding (J. Perchalski), 22 Aug PCWA (B. Bowman), 27 Aug Holmes (E. Schlabach), 7 Sep CCE (B. Sparks), 23 Sep Conneaut (B. Royse), and 2 Oct Metzger Res in Allen (J. Ruedisueli). Half were inland.

**Red Phalarope:** All reports: 2 Nov Walnut Beach, Ashtabula (J. Pogacnik), 8 Nov (J. Hays) to 11 Nov (J. Van Coney) Hamilton (third SW record), 16 Nov Rocky River Pk (G. Hostetler et al.).

**Pomarine Jaeger:** An imm was at HBSP 30 Oct (L. Rosche), and two dark imm off LSR 17 Nov (J. Pogacnik).

**Parasitic Jaeger:** An intermediate-morph juvenile was reported at Rocky River Pk 13 Nov, then two there 14 Nov, with a single bird 21 Nov.

**Jaeger sp.:** L. Rosche had an imm at Painesville 30 Oct, and on 17 Nov G. Leidy had one at Lorain and J. Pogacnik another at Eastlake.

**Franklin's Gull:** H. Petruschke had an imm at CCE 18 Aug, D. Sanders one at PCWA on 15 Sep; one was at Caesar Ck SP 9 Oct (L. Gara) through 13 Oct (E. Roush), one at BCSP 11 Oct (D. Overacker), and a first-year bird at EFSP 15 Oct (H. Armstrong).

**Little Gull:** An imm was at Kelleys Isl 15 Aug (T. Bartlett), one on the 14 Sep CPNWRC, two ad at LSR 20 Oct (J. Pogacnik), a first-winter at Dike 14 2 Nov (S. Zadar), 2 ad at LSR and two at Fairport Hbr 29 Nov (Pogacnik), and one at Eastlake (L. Rosche) the same day.

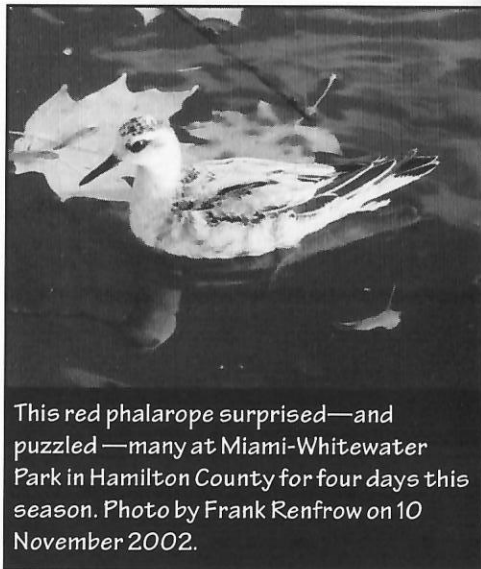
**Black-headed Gull:** One report came from Eastlake 17 Nov.

**Bonaparte's Gull:** Eight were at the CCE 3 Aug (J. Brumfield); 40 there on the following day for the ONWRC outnumbered herring and ring-billed gulls. Large numbers stayed through the cop, as evidenced by 9478 tallied by J. Pogacnik at LSR 29 Nov.

**Mew Gull:** One was reportedly among Eastlake's throngs 14 Nov.

**California Gull:** An ad at Eastlake 3 Nov (L. Rosche, ph) was refound by B. Morrison and K. Miller 8 Nov. Accepted by the OBRC. A first-winter bird was reported at Huron 18 Nov.

**Thayer's Gull:** E. Elder found one at Eastlake 13 Nov; an ad and a first-winter were there 14 Nov (L. Rosche). One was at Dike 14 on 9 Nov (S. Zadar), and one at LSR 17 Nov (J. Pogacnik). A first-winter bird was at Lorain 23 Nov (G. Leidy).



This red phalarope surprised—and puzzled—many at Miami-Whitewater Park in Hamilton County for four days this season. Photo by Frank Renfrow on 10 November 2002.

**Iceland Gull:** E. Elder picked one out among the Eastlake multitudes 13 Nov.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** Widespread as usual, with best numbers six (two ad, one 3<sup>rd</sup>/one 2<sup>nd</sup>/two 1<sup>st</sup>-winter) at Eastlake 14 Nov (L. Rosche), and five (2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 3 ad) at Lorain 23 Nov (G. Leidy). An ad was at Sandusky 29 Nov (M. Busam). Remarkable was the often-simultaneous presence of two adults far inland at Caesar Ck SP (7 Sep-27 Oct—completing molt to basic—L. Gara) and another at BCSP (15 Sep-20 Oct, D. Overacker).

**Glaucous Gull:** Six birds, all young ones, showed up between 23 Nov (Rocky River Pk, M. Hendrick) and 30 Nov (Avon Lk, G. Leidy).

**Black-legged Kittiwake:** At LSR, J.

Pogacnik had an imm 17 Nov, and B. Morrison found another at E. 72<sup>nd</sup> St in Cleveland 29 Nov.

**Caspian Tern:** High count (J. Hammond) 3 Aug at Pipe Ck WA, with 76 in a roost that stayed till teal season. Latest was one at Lk Rockwell 27 Oct (L. Rosche).

**Common Tern:** On the ONWRC, 62 on 4 Aug were local breeders, but 895 on 1 Sep and 690 on 2 Oct were staging migrants. Eighty inland at BCSP 14 Sep was a good count (D. Overacker). S. Zadar had 125 at Dike 14 as late as 2 Nov, where one remained 26 Nov (G. Miller).

**Forster's Tern:** V. Fazio had 550+ at the CCE 17 Aug, by far the high reported; 311 were there 2 Oct (ONWRC). The last report, of 16, came from Ottawa 20 Nov (Fazio).

**Least Tern:** Two reported: one at Conneaut 19 Aug, and one at Sheldon Marsh 29 Aug; documentation has been promised to the OBRC on the first sighting at least.

**Black Tern:** Sightings numbered 25 (15 inland), birds 138. High count was 47 at Hueston Wds SP 17 Aug (J. Hickey). Nearly all were seen in Aug, with two in Sep, but one at Dike 14 on 14 Nov (S. Zadar) tied the state record late date.

**Ringed Turtle-Dove:** A dove in a Findlay backyard 30 Aug (Y. Cline)-21 Oct (K. Noblet) was eventually determined to be this species, an avicultural escapee.

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** The latest report came from MWW 3 Oct (N. Cade).

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** Four Oct sightings culminated in three at KPWA on the 12<sup>th</sup> (R. Sempier; the last was reported from Dike 14 in Cleveland 2 Nov (S. Zadar).

**Barn Owl:** One was in s. Hancock 16 Sep (B. Von Stein *vide* B. Hardesty).

**Short-eared Owl:** Sixteen reported, 10 along Lk Erie, including one early at Magee 14 Sept (R. Harlan, S. Wagner); One was at MWW 20 Oct (S. Bobonick), and reports from KPWA came on 10 (G. Rettig) and 25 (B. Schiebart) Nov. Three or more were near Elkton, Columbiana, 26 Oct-23 Nov (D&B Lane).

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** Two were at Dike 14, one 9 and one 11 Nov (S. Zadar).

**Common Nighthawk:** Sparse. Migrants peaked in early Sep with 97 over Columbus the 1<sup>st</sup> (J. Hammond), 100+ in Lucas the 2<sup>nd</sup> (M. Anderson), and "hundreds" in Cuyahoga on the 3<sup>rd</sup> (L. Gardella). A lone bird was in Findlay 1 Oct (D. Kohl *vide* B. Hardesty).



This adult lesser black-backed gull provided a very unusual inland record at Caesar Creek State Park in Warren County. Photo by Scott Reeves on 13 September 2002.

**Whip-poor-will:** A bird vocalized in *Adams* through 2 Oct (**L. Miller**).

**Chimney Swift:** **B. McCullough's** earliest roost ever (of 800+) in *Geauga* was on 8 Aug. Dike 14 had ~4000 on 5 Oct (**S. Zadar**), and HBSP 40+ on 14 Oct (**K. Metcalf**).

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** A record late date for confirmed individuals of this species—30 Nov—was set by imm birds in Westerville, *Franklin* (from early Nov, **G. Payton**) and Massillon (from 2 Nov, **M. J. Knowles**), both ph **J. Hammond**.

**Calliope Hummingbird:** **J. Foor** discovered this bird 28 Oct in Chillicothe, *Ross* (**B. Bosstic**, ph). Identified and captured 1 Nov, this hatch-year male unfortunately died during handling for banding. Photographs, measurements, and in-hand examination were documented (**A. Chartier**, specimen), and accepted by the OBRC. Calliope was also reported this fall in Missouri, North Carolina, New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania; the species would if accepted be a first record in the latter two states as well. See article in this issue.

**Rufous Hummingbird:** Nine confirmed reports were unprecedented: ad female 19 Sept-eop *Logan* (**D. Daniel**, ph) banded 26 Sep; ad female 27 Oct-eop *Columbus* (**S. Langendorfer**, ph) captured 29 Nov [this bird had been banded 11/20/01 as HY near York, SC]; ad male 'Sept'-eop *Kidron*, *Wayne* (**S. Snyder**, ph) banded 7 Dec; HY female *Wooster*, *Wayne*, 'Oct'-eop (**W. Gerber**, ph) banded 7 Dec; ad male 23 Oct *Carrollton*, *Carroll* (**D. Reed**); ad female 24 Oct-eop *Carrollton*, *Carroll* (**D. Reed**, ph); ad female *Batavia*, *Clermont*, 'late Oct'-eop (**C. Johnson**, ph) banded 29 Nov; ad female 'Nov'-eop *Manchester*, *Adams* (**C. Bedel**, ph) banded 13 Dec; ad male 15 Oct-eop *Cincinnati* (**G&K Rodocker**). See article in this issue. The *Logan*, *Franklin*, and *Wayne* birds have thus far been accepted by the OBRC. A second-hand report of an adult male in *Delaware* could not be confirmed.



This adult male rufous hummingbird appeared at a Wayne County feeder in September and stayed throughout the season. Photo by Allen Chartier on 7 December 2002.

**Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird:** Three reports of one of these two *Selasphorus* species: imm/female 25 Aug *Lake* (**J. Pogacnik**); imm/female 7 Oct-10 Nov *Mt. Hope*, *Holmes* (**M. Hershberger**), imm male *Madeira*, *Hamilton*, 17 Nov-29 Dec (*vide* **A. Chartier**, ph).

**Red-headed Woodpecker:** Several reported a good mast season for oaks and beeches. **D. Chasar** reported they'd vacated CVNP by 5 Oct, but **E. Tramer** observed they continued to "benefit from oak savannah restoration in the Oak Openings."

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** High count 17 on the 6 Oct ONWRC.

**Northern Flicker:** Sixty were in *Caesar Ck SP* 28 Nov (**N. Cade**).

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** Eleven reports, normal schedule; two *Parma* 18 Sep (**S. Zadar**).

**Eastern Wood-Pewee:** Strange was one in song at *Gilmore Ponds* on the very late date of 27 Oct (**M. Busam**).

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** Three field reports for this not-so-easy fall ID. BSBO banded a total of 24 at *Navarre*, three on 22 Sept, spanning the period 18 Aug-13 Oct.

**Acadian Flycatcher:** **G. Links** had one vocalizing in *Wood* 31 Aug. Latest report came from *Franklin* 27 Sep (**R. Thorn**).

**Alder Flycatcher:** **T. Bartlett** at *Springville Marsh*, *Seneca*, had six willows and one alder singing 1 Aug, and only the latter the 11<sup>th</sup>. He banded a HY male, ID based on measurements, there 21 Sep.

**Willow Flycatcher:** Late birds were in the CVNP 14 Sep (**D. Chasar**) and in *Franklin* 18 Sep (**R. Thorn**).

**Least Flycatcher:** A migrant was present for the 4 Aug ONWRC. **S. Reeves** had one calling at *MWW* on 5 Oct.

**Eastern Phoebe:** **J. Kuenzli** saw two of these hardy birds at ONWR 26 Oct, **K. Metcalf** another at HBSNP 27 Oct, and **M. Anderson** one in his yard in *Lucas* 2 Dec.

**Great Crested Flycatcher:** **S. Reeves** reported the last, at *Caesar Ck SP* 3 Oct.

**Western Kingbird:** Our second of the year was at *KPWA* 9 Aug (**C. Bombaci**, ph). Accepted by the OBRC.

**Eastern Kingbird:** Ten migrants were in *Holmes* 31 Aug (**E. Schlabach**). One remained at *Crooked Run Pk* in *Clermont* 6 Oct (**J. Lehman**).

**Loggerhead Shrike:** **R. Sempier** found one (ph) at *KPWA* 26 Oct, seen fitfully by m obs through the period. Accepted by the OBRC.

**Northern Shrike:** Six reports, the earliest 1 Nov at *Magee* (**M. Warren**).

**White-eyed Vireo:** BSBO banded a tardy bird at *Navarre Marsh* 31 Oct.

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** Four were reported 5 Oct, three in *Coshocton* (**L. Yoder**) and one at *EFSP* (**L. McNeeley**).

**Blue-headed Vireo:** One was singing in *Columbus* 3 Nov (**R. Thorn**) and the latest reported was 16 Nov during the *Kelleys Isl* census (**T. Bartlett**).

**Warbling Vireo:** Quite late was one banded at *Navarre Marsh* by BSBO 31 Oct.

**Philadelphia Vireo:** **G. Leidy** had a very respectable 10 in *West Ck Preserve* in *Parma* 26 Sep. BSBO netted a straggler in *Navarre* 31 Oct.

**Red-eyed Vireo:** Last reported in *Licking* 12 Oct (**J. Hammond**).

**Blue Jay:** **R. Thorn** had 190+ migrants in two hours at *Alum Ck Res* 30 Sep, and **S. Reeves** 300-350 over *Caesar Ck SP* 3 Oct.



For the second year in a row, Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area in Wyandot County hosted a loggerhead shrike. This one was found and photographed on 26 October 2002 by Ron Sempier.

- Horned Lark:** High count was 123 on the 3 Nov ONWRC.
- Purple Martin:** A flock of 120 in *Holmes* 17 Aug diminished to two by 2 Sep (**J. Miller**). **L. Rosche** had eight late birds at HBSP 21 Sep.
- Tree Swallow:** "Several thousand" cruised Sheldon Marsh 2 Nov (**B. Royse, H. Ostermiller**), and 100 were tallied the same day by the ONWRC. Last was a lone bird at Hoover Res 27 Nov (**J. Kuenzli**).
- Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** High count 210+ at Resthaven WA 23 Sep (**V. Fazio**); quite late was one 16 Nov at Guilford Lk in *Columbiana* (**B&D Lane**).
- Bank Swallow:** ~1600 were at PCWA 8 Aug (**G. Leidy**).
- Barn Swallow:** The 10 Aug CPNWRC found 246 for the high count. Two juv lingered at BCSP through 12 Nov (**G. Miller**).
- Red-breasted Nuthatch:** Nineteen birds reported, most probably having nested in the NE, such as the 11 on the CVNP census of 14 Sep (**D. Chasar**). **E. Tramer** reported only one in the Toledo area, on 24 Sep. Hardly an invasion year.
- Brown Creeper:** First reported as a capture 29 Sep at Navarre (BSBO).
- Carolina Wren:** The 14 Sep CVNP census found 31. Eight were on Kelleys Isl on 16 Nov (**T. Bartlett**).
- House Wren:** The ONWRC of 4 Aug had 27. **B. Royse** had one in *Franklin* 7 Oct.
- Winter Wren:** BSBO reported the first migrant at Navarre on 16 Sep.
- Sedge Wren:** Two sang in *Lucas* late Jul-mid Aug (*vide* **E. Tramer**). Two were near Winton Wds, *Hamilton*, 1 Aug (**R. Kolde**), and two at MWW 3 Aug (**P. Wharton**). Fifteen at the VOA site in *Butler* on 7 Aug (**M. Busam**) grew to 20 on 13 Aug (**W. Hull**), with nesting confirmed 12 Aug. **V. Fazio** reported 20 territories at KWPA 1 Aug. Two were at BCSP 16-17 Aug (**D. Overacker**). **S. Zadar** had single birds at Dike 14 on 22 & 28 Sep and 20 Oct.
- Marsh Wren:** **E. Schlabach** reported one in a soybean field in *Tuscarawas* 8-12 Oct. Present for the 16 Nov CPNWRC.
- Golden-crowned Kinglet:** First report 9-10 birds in *Paulding* 28 Sep (**M&D Dunakin**), and largest numbers ~100 at Metzger Marsh WA 2 Nov (**B. Royse**).
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** First 29 Sep at Lakewood (**P. Lozano**). On 20 Oct 52 were at Dike 14 (**S. Zadar**) and ~100 at Sheldon Marsh (**M. Busam**). Three were on Kelleys Isl 23 Nov (**T. Bartlett** *vide* **V. Fazio**).
- Veery:** Last reported 29 Sep at Mitchell Mem Forest, *Hamilton* (**N. Cade**).
- Gray-cheeked Thrush:** Last reported by the ONWRC, with two on 6 Oct.
- Swainson's Thrush:** High diurnal count 35 at Magee 14 Sep (**R. Harlan, S. Wagner**), and (unusually) latest reported for the 3 Nov ONWRC.
- Hermit Thrush:** Latish was one in *Hancock* 19 Nov (**S. Baxter** *vide* **B. Hardesty**).
- Wood Thrush:** Latest were birds on 5 Oct in *Tuscarawas* (**E. Schlabach**) and two at EFSP (**J. Lehman**).
- Gray Catbird:** Thirty-four were at Jaite in the CVNP 13 Sep (**Suzanne Wagner**); **L. Rosche** had one in Rocky River on 29 Oct.
- Brown Thrasher:** Nov reports: 24<sup>th</sup> Gilmore (**M. Busam**) and MWW 29<sup>th</sup> (**N. Cade**).

- American Pipit:** Very early but not unprecedented were six at the Hebron fish hatchery (**G. Buckey** et al.) on 16 Aug. **B&D Lane** had 100+ near Garfield, *Mahoning*, 16 Nov.
- Cedar Waxwing:** Eight flocks in the triple digits reported, the largest 800+ in Columbus 10 Nov (**R. Thorn**) and 750 in *Lucas* 27 Oct (**M. Anderson**).
- Blue-winged Warbler:** Very late was one banded at the CVNP 11 Oct (**Su. Wagner**).
- Golden-winged Warbler:** Six reports, the latest 3 Oct Sandy Ridge MP (**B. Whan**).
- Tennessee Warbler:** Plenteous, with 45 in Caesar's Ck Gorge 21 Sep (**S. Reeves**) and 28 in **M. Anderson's** yard the next day, then six there 6 Oct (last report).
- Orange-crowned Warbler:** First seen 22 Sep Kelleys Isl (**V. Fazio**), last in *Lucas* 10 Nov (**M. Anderson**). **K. Metcalf** saw a possible western-race bird at HBSNP 9 Nov. **Anderson** had one in *Lucas* 11 Nov.
- Nashville Warbler:** **L. Gooch** had one at Shaker Lks 29 Aug, and **S. Zadar** 64 at Dike 14 on 2 Oct for the high count. **K. Metcalf** found the last, 27 Oct at HBSNP.
- Northern Parula:** Remarkable was one banded 26 Oct at Navarre Marsh by the BSBO.
- Yellow Warbler:** **R. Rickard** had late Sep birds, 28<sup>th</sup> at LaDue Res and 29<sup>th</sup> at HBSP.
- Chestnut-sided Warbler:** Late 6 Oct at MWW (**S. Reeves**) and on the ONWRC.
- Magnolia Warbler:** High count 25 at HBSP 18 Sep (**L. Rosche**); last report 11 Oct Hoover Res (**R. Thorn**).
- Cape May Warbler:** Four one-day counts of 30+ were reported, including 40+ on 21 Sep at GLSM (**N. Cade**). BSBO netted 265 at Navarre 10 Sep-17 Oct.
- Black-throated Blue Warbler:** High count seven at Magee 14 Sep (**R. Harlan, S. Wagner**). One was tardy in Toledo on 6 Nov (**R. Nirschl**).
- Yellow-rumped Warbler:** First noted 13 Sep at HBSP (**K. Metcalf**), their numbers swelled to 326 on 2 Oct at Dike 14 (**S. Zadar**).
- Black-throated Green Warbler:** Twelve were in Parma 26 Sep (**G. Leidy**), and one lingered in the Oak Openings 22 Oct (**E. Tramer**).
- Blackburnian Warbler:** Seven were in the CVNP 14 Sep (**L. Rosche**), and the latest report came from Hoover Res 11 Oct (**R. Thorn**).
- Yellow-throated Warbler:** Last seen at Ira Rd in the CVNP 30 Sep (**T&M Romito**).
- Pine Warbler:** Two were at Mitchell Mem Forest in *Hamilton* 28 Aug (**F. Renfrow**), one sang at N. Chagrin Res'n 29 Sep (**K. Metcalf**), and one was in *Coshocton* 6 Oct (**L. Yoder**).
- Prairie Warbler:** Lingered through 7 Oct was one at EFSP (**E. Wolff**).
- Palm Warbler:** Twelve were at MWW 6 Oct (**J. Lehman**). One of the eastern race was in Parma 17 Oct (**G. Leidy** et al.), where the last was found 10 Nov (**Leidy**).
- Bay-breasted Warbler:** Fairly numerous, the last 13 Oct Gilmore Ponds (**M. Busam**).
- Blackpoll Warbler:** Kelleys Isl's census had 78 on 22 Sept (**V. Fazio**), and BSBO netted 614 between 3 Sep and 18 Oct at Navarre.
- Cerulean Warbler:** Hard to find in fall, one seen Spring Grove Cem 31 Aug (**N. Cade**).



- Black-and-white Warbler:** High count 12 in *Paulding* 29 Aug (M&D Dunakin).
- American Redstart:** Nineteen at Kelleys Isl 22 Sep (V. Fazio), and one as late as 6 Nov in *Lucas* (R. Nirschl).
- Prothonotary Warbler:** Three were still singing 12 Aug in *Mercer* (J. McCormac).
- Worm-eating Warbler:** A nice find in appropriate breeding habitat was one in *Coshocton* 5 Oct (L. Yoder).
- Ovenbird:** Six were in *Holmes* 21 Sep (E. Schlabach), and one stalked Cleveland's Public Square 27 Oct (C. Spagnoli).
- Northern Waterthrush:** First appeared 10 Aug at CPNWR (G. Links), with the last departing 6 Oct in Columbus (R. Thorn).
- Louisiana Waterthrush:** One at the Cleveland Garden Center on 14 Aug apparently persisted through 21 Sep (R. Harlan, S. Wagner).
- Kentucky Warbler:** E. Roush spotted one at Cowan Lk SP on 2 Sep.
- Connecticut Warbler:** BSBO netted a record 20 between 8 Sep and 6 Oct at Navarre. Field observers saw about a dozen in mid-Sep, and an ad female was in *Coshocton* 5 Oct (L. Yoder).
- Mourning Warbler:** Seen as seldom as the above, with the last 6 Oct at Gilmore Ponds (M. Busam). Three each seen 19 and 28 Sep in *Clermont* (B. Stanley) and Dike 14 (S. Zadar) respectively.
- Common Yellowthroat:** Eight migrants were in *Coshocton* 18 Sep (E. Schlabach). E. Roush observed a pair feeding a fledgling as late as 7 Sept at Cowan Lk SP.
- Hooded Warbler:** Two males on territory and females feeding fledglings were at Tar Hollow SP, *Hocking*, 2 Sep (R. Thorn). R. Harlan and S. Wagner noticed one singing and on territory in Wadsworth, *Medina*, 2 Oct. Max five in *Coshocton* 18 Sep (E. Schlabach).
- Wilson's Warbler:** Appeared 28 Aug in Rocky River (P. Lozano), and bid us adieu 5 Oct in *Tuscarawas* (E. Schlabach). High count 15 at HBSP 18 Sep (L. Rosche).
- Canada Warbler:** First seen at HBSNP 19 Aug (K. Metcalf), and the latest seen at the same place 3 Oct (B. Conlon).
- Yellow-breasted Chat:** A local bird remained at EFSP through 25 Sep (H. Armstrong), and the latest was at Crooked Run Pk elsewhere in *Clermont* 6 Oct (J. Lehman).
- Summer Tanager:** A molting male was at Kelleys Isl 15 Aug (T. Bartlett). Two pairs 1.5 mi apart were still in the Oak Openings 16 Sep (E. Tramer). Last appeared at MWW 6 Oct (S. Reeves).
- Scarlet Tanager:** Three still sang at N. Chagrin Res'n 11 Aug (K. Metcalf). One still came to a *Hancock* feeder as late as 8 Nov (W. Seiler fide B. Hardesty).
- American Tree Sparrow:** First appeared 21 Oct, at LSR (J. Pogacnik). Thirty-two were in Parma 19 Nov (G. Leidy).
- Chipping Sparrow:** High count 100+ in *Licking* 12 Oct (J. Hammond). Two were still on Kelleys Isl 16 Nov (T. Bartlett).
- Clay-colored Sparrow:** One frequented a Findlay feeder 3-8 Oct (A. Wymer fide B. Hardesty); 14 Sep and 9 Oct birds were at Dike 14, and one in Parma 9 Oct (G. Leidy).
- Field Sparrow:** ~Fifty were in *Clermont* 11 Oct (B. Stanley), and one was in *Delaware* 11 Nov (R. Thorn).

- Vesper Sparrow:** E. Schlabach had three in *Tuscarawas* 26 Oct for the high count.
- Lark Sparrow:** Three remained in traditional Oak Openings spots through 7 Aug (E. Tramer), and one was near MWW 16 Aug (K&D Roth).
- Savannah Sparrow:** J. McCormac and B. Bosstic found 35+ in a small *Ross* wetland 22 Oct. Last reported 23 Nov at Gilmore Ponds (M. Busam).
- Grasshopper Sparrow:** A pair carried food at Deer Ck SP late on 5 Aug (R. Thorn). Ten were at a grassland area in *Huron* 17 Aug (R. Harlan, S. Wagner). Latest was one 2 Sept at MWW (J. Lehman).
- Henslow's Sparrow:** Four remained at the VOA site in *Butler* 7 Aug, and 10 there on 17 Aug (M. Busam).
- Le Conte's Sparrow:** G. Leidy located this elusive species in Parma 8 and 21 Oct.
- Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow:** All records: 20 Sep ONWR (J. Pogacnik), 30 Sep Sandy Ridge MP (C. Rieker), 30 Sep MWW (F. Frick) then two there 11 Oct (P. Wharton) with one 28 Oct (N. Cade), 1 Oct Parma (G. Leidy), and two at Gilmore Ponds 12-16 Oct (M. Busam); Dike 14 harbored two 28 Sep, two 5 Oct, and one 11 Oct (all S. Zadar).
- Fox Sparrow:** Not reported till 15 Oct, at MWW (N. Cade). Twenty-two were at Dike 14 on 7 Nov (S. Zadar), and three in *Coshocton* 17 Nov (L. Yoder).
- Lincoln's Sparrow:** First reported from downtown Cleveland 18 Sep (S. Wright) and 42 at Dike 14 on 11 Oct (S. Zadar); one persisted in *Franklin* 1 Nov (B. Royse).
- Swamp Sparrow:** Four migrants were at MWW 25 Sep (W. Hull), where 40 were counted 20 Oct (J. Lehman). Dike 14 had 73 on 11 Oct (S. Zadar).
- White-throated Sparrow:** One was at HBSP 19 Aug (K. Metcalf). At Dike 14, a phenomenal 507 were tallied 20 Oct (S. Zadar).
- Harris's Sparrow:** One came to a Lithopolis, *Fairfield*, feeder 20-26 Nov (M. England). Accepted by the OBRC.
- White-crowned Sparrow:** Not reported till 7 Oct, at the CVNP (M&T Romito), but numbers grew to a record-setting 1709 at Dike 14 by 22 Oct (S. Zadar).
- Dark-eyed Junco:** First reported 19 Aug, from HBSNP (K. Metcalf). Max was 336 at Kelleys Isl 16 Nov (T. Bartlett et al.).
- Lapland Longspur:** From Conneaut 28 Sep came the first report (J. Pogacnik); by 12 Oct, four were at the other end of the state at EFSP (B. Stanley). Five were in *Holmes* 3 Nov (M. Hershberger), and L. Rosche had 30 at Fairport Hbr 27 Nov.
- Snow Bunting:** First reported 1 Nov, at the CCE (D. Sanders); by 8 Nov 100+ were at Fairport Hbr (M. England), and inland 50+ were at Berlin Res 14 Nov (B. Morrison).
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** Last reported 13 Oct, from *Clermont* (F. Kidd).
- Indigo Bunting:** An albino bird enlivened the 4 Aug ONWRC. A female was at Dike 14 on the late date of 7 Nov (S. Zadar).
- Dickcissel:** Scarce. V. Fazio reported 10 territories at KPWA 1 Aug, and B. Foppe two at BIWA 3 Aug. One was in *Union* (R. Harlan, S. Wagner) 4 Aug, two at MWW 10 Aug (N. Cade), two in *Williams* 21 Sep (J. Pogacnik), and a bird on Kelleys Isl 22 Sep (Fazio).

**Bobolink:** Twenty were at MWW 3 Aug (**P. Wharton**). Eighty-seven at the VOA site in Butler 14 Aug were four by 23 Sep. Sixteen were at PCWA 22 Aug (**B. Barchus**). At CPNWR 224 were overhead for the 14 Sep census. Last 2 Oct at Dike 14 (**S. Zadar**).

**Eastern Meadowlark:** Seventeen at the VOA site in *Butler* on 7 Aug (**M. Busam**) grew to 40 by 20 Oct (**J. Lehman**). Thirty were in *Holmes* 26 Aug (**E. Schlabach**).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Two adults were in a mixed blackbird flock at PCWA on 29 Aug (**G. Miller** et al.). An ad male was at Rocky Fk SP 31 Aug (**A. Sigler**).

**Rusty Blackbird:** Early was one at Resthaven WA 23 Sep (**V. Fazio**); another was at LSR 29 Sep (**J. Pogacnik**). Flocks of 30 were at Hoover Res 14 Nov (**M. England**) and Gilmore Ponds 23 Nov (**M. Busam**).

**Brewer's Blackbird:** **G. Miller** reported one in a feedlot in *Fulton* 18 Nov, and **J. Pogacnik** two in *Ottawa* 28 Nov.

**Common Grackle:** **B. Glick** reported blackbird flocks, mostly of this species, of 15,000+ on 6 Nov and 50,000+ on 22 Nov in SE *Wayne*.

**Baltimore Oriole:** **R. Harlan** and **S. Wagner** had eight at Firestone MP in Akron 19 Aug. A first-year bird was in *Ashtabula* on the late date of 23 Nov (**S. Wright**, ph).

**Orchard Oriole:** The BSBO banded two at Navarre 21 Aug. One on 7 Sep was a late record for **M. Anderson** in *Lucas*.

**Purple Finch:** **E. Tramer** justly called them 'scarce' in *Lucas*, with only two reports for the period. The high count was only two, in *Hamilton* 29 Sep (**N. Cade**).

**Common Redpoll:** One appeared at a feeder just s. of ONWR 24 Nov (**S. Cummings**).

**Pine Siskin:** Six reports of single birds, the first 21 Sep at HBSP (**R. Harlan, S. Wagner**), the last at Caesar Ck SP 28 Nov (**N. Cade**).

**American Goldfinch:** A female was incubating four eggs as late as 12 Sep in *Geauga* (**K. Metcalf**); nest abandoned 18 Sep. **R. Sempier** estimated 500+ at KPWA 12 Oct.

**Evening Grosbeak:** Two reports. A flock of 26 was in *Cuyahoga* 13 Nov (**C. Rieker**), and another of six at Hoover Res the following day (**M. England**).

## Contributors

We are grateful to the following birders who reported observations during the season: Matt Anderson, Thomas Archdeacon, Hank Armstrong, Carole Babyak, Nick Barber, Brian Barchus, Sue Baxter, Chris Bedel, Betty Berry, Andy Bess, Dan Best, Ned Bixler, Steve Bobonick, Brad Bolton, Charles Bombaci, Paul Boyd, Bill Bosstic, Bruce Bowman, Margaret Bowman, Nancy Brearton, Doug Brewer, David Brinkman, Jeff Brown, Lori Brumbaugh, Jen Brumfield, Gina Buckley, Byron Burnett, Mike Busam, Jason Cade, Neill Cade, Steve Cagan, Allen Chartier, Ann Chasar, Dwight Chasar, Yolanda Cline, Suzanne Clingman, Bob Conlon, Sam Corbo, Mellissa Cover, Scott Crawford, Rich Cressman, Becky Cullen, Sharon Cummings, Jim Dagley, Donna Daniel, Ken Davis, Leo Deininger, Dave Dister, Laura Dorman, Roberta Duktig, Doug Dunakin, Micki Dunakin, Elinor Elder, Marcus England, Jason Estep, Ben Fambrough, Ginny Fantetti, Joe Faulkner, Vic Fazio, Duane Ferris, Bob Finkelstein, Andy Fondrk, Jean Foor, Bob Foppe, Frank Frick, Dan Frisk, Paul Froehlich, Jim Fry, Jayme Fuller, Larry Gara, Lou Gardella, Paul Gardner, Rick Gardner, William Gerber, Bruce Glick, Jeff Goff, Laura Gooch, Chuck Gooding, Jeff Grabmeier, Darlena Graham, Chris Grame, Joe Hammond, Ray Hannikman, Betty Hardesty, Rob Harlan, Jeff Hays, Lana Hays, Stan Hedeem, Dave Helm, John Herman, Aaron Hershberger, Michael Hershberger, Jim Hickey, Rebecca Hinkle, Hank Hiris, Sally Hiris, Dave Hochadel, Janet Holbrook, Craig Holt, Dave Horn, Gabe Hostetler, William Hull, Cindy Johnson, Bill Jones, Phyllis Jones, Ned Keller, Fran Kidd, Peter King, Everitt Kitchen, Mary Jo Knowles, Ron Kolde, Bill Kovans, John Kuenzli, Sandra Langendorfer,

Steve Landes, Bob Lane, Denise Lane, Jason Larson, Bill Leaman, Dave LeGallee, Jay Lehman, Gabe Leidy, Tom LePage, Greg Links, Doreene Linzell, Tami Longaberger, Edie Lotz, Paula Lozano, Bernard Master, Charlotte Mathena, Jim McCormac, Mike McCormac, Bob McCullough, Kathy McDonald, Lee McNeeley, Paul McSweeney, Gary Meszaros, Kevin Metcalf, Greg Miller, Kent Miller, Jeffrey A. Miller, Lucy Miller, Dave Minney, Mary Mispion, Marshal Moser, Ben Morrison, Donald Morse, Heather Nagy, Rick Nirschl, Kathy Noblet, Ann Oliver, Helen Ostermiller, Ken Ostermiller, Doug Overacker, Anne Paschall, Sharon Pawlowski, Glenda Payton, Steve Pelikan, John Perchalski, Stacy Peterson, Haans Petruschke, Ed Pierce, John Pogacnik, Glenn Redmer, Dale Reed, Frank Renfrow, Scott Reeves, Grant Rettig, Richard Rickard, Craig Rieker, Bill Rinehart, George & Kathy Rodocker, Randel Rogers, Mary Anne Romito, Larry Rosche, Dennis Ross, Kirk Ross, Ed Roush, Bob Royse, Jonathan Ruedisueli, David Russell, Dave St. John, Dan Sanders, Charlie Saunders, Andrea Scheidler, Regina Schieltz, Ed Schlabach, Robert Schlabach, Becky Schwiebert, Joe Sedransk, Wilma Seiler, Ron Sempier, Lois Shadix, Rod Sharpnack, Bill Shively, Troy Shively, Kelly Sieg, Andy Sigler, Darlene Sillick, Shaune Skinner, Nick Smith, Elaine Sniveley, Su Snyder, Chris Spagnoli, Brad Sparks, Bill Stanley, Mike Stasko, Gene Stauffer, Jay Stenger, Steve Stockford, John Switzer, Laurel Theriault, Bill Thompson, Rob Thorn, Elliott Tramer, Roger Troutman, Jane Van Coney, Barb Von Stein, Sandy Wagner (S. Wagner), Suzanne Wagner (Su. Wagner), Mary Warren, John Watts, Wayne Wauligman, Bill Whan, Pete Whan, Paul Wharton, Ben Winger, Eric Wolff, Alan Wormington, Scott Wright, Arlene Wymer, Aden Yoder, Emery A. Yoder, Leroy E. Yoder, Sheryl Young, Sean Zadar. We also received valuable information from the editors of *The Bobolink* and internet resources managed by Vic Fazio, Ned Keller, Chuck Anderson, and the Black Swamp Bird Observatory. 🐦



This striking American avocet was photographed at Conneaut Harbor in Ashtabula County on 11 August 2002 by Gary Meszaros.

## Further Afield

**Rob Harlan**

3361 Columbia Woods Drive, Apt. F, Norton, OH 44203-5778  
kiskadee96@hotmail.com

Everyone referred to it simply as “the impoundment,” or sometimes “Gordon.” More precisely, it was Gordon Park Impoundment, a diked dredge disposal area on the Cleveland lakefront; a last repository for the most gruesomely tainted sludge scooped up from the bottom of Cleveland Harbor by the US Army Corps of Engineers, a wasteland created especially to contain a witches’ brew too noxious to be barged out and dumped into a comparatively pristine Lake Erie. I remember it well. It was delightful.

A prime lakefront location, an ever-changing variety of habitats, and a dedicated corps of birders all combined to make the area a rarity factory, the likes of which I’ve never encountered before or since, anywhere. Although small in size, the area was situated on a natural flight line and provided a suite of habitats that birds weren’t able to find elsewhere in the vicinity. It was a spot rarities simply could not afford to pass by, and the birders were there to keep track—eared grebe, American white pelican, tricolored heron, yellow rail, king rail, piping plover, sharp-tailed sandpiper, curlew sandpiper, least tern, Le Conte’s sparrow, Smith’s longspur, and so on. This is a nice list—an above average list.

But things change. Over time, people stopped referring to the area as “the impoundment” or “Gordon,” and somehow in recent years it has become known as Dike 14. How and why, I don’t know. But a name change does not seem entirely inappropriate for an area that has been in constant flux since its creation; morphing from open water to open mudflat with marshy margins, to a bur-infested weedy wetland, to a brushy young willow and cottonwood forest. Even this natural progression was often altered as fresh batches of slurry were pumped into the impounded area, initiating the chain of maturation all over again.

Even though Gordon Park Impoundment has become Dike 14, and the habitat therein has matured, the birds still flock to it, although with stricter public access birder presence there has diminished over the years. Despite fewer reports, it clearly still has the potential, with improved access, to be one of the hottest birding hotspots anywhere in Ohio. I would, in fact, still place it in my top ten list of hotspots, along with, in no particular order: Conneaut Harbor, Headlands Beach State Park / Fairport Harbor, the Crane Creek complex of Magee Marsh Wildlife Area / Metzger Marsh Wildlife Area / Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area, Hoover Reservoir, Miami-Whitewater Wetlands, the Lake Erie islands, Shawnee State Forest, and wherever the next new species for Ohio appears, settles in, and stays long enough for me to see it.

Those are Ohio’s current hotspots, in my opinion. But birding, like Gordon Impoundment, is all about change. What were the hotspots 25 years ago? 50 years ago? Are the hotspots of 50 years ago still as hot today, or have our current hotspots only recently heated up? Fortunately, we have an idea, thanks to two books that have fallen out of style in recent years, books that even if you happen to have them on your shelves, you may not have given a second thought for years. Surely most

birders have used, or are at least aware of, the series of bird finding guides made famous by their creator, James A. Lane, the so-called “Lane Guides,” now adopted by the American Birding Association as “ABA Bird-Finding Guides.” Typically, these guides cover only a portion of a state, or at most an entire state. But before these in-depth guides were created, Dr. Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr. (1907-2001) took it upon himself to cover *all* the states, and with the assistance of knowledgeable local birders did a remarkably thorough job.

Pettingill’s *A Guide to Bird-Finding East of the Mississippi* was published in 1951, while its western companion hit the market two years later. These volumes were real eye-openers for thousands of birders, and set the stage for intensive birding ecotourism that continues today. A second edition was published in 1977; taken together, they provide an excellent benchmark to compare which sites were hot roughly 50 years ago, and roughly 25 years ago, with the best that today can offer.

The 1951 first edition devotes 34 pages to Ohio bird-finding sites, and includes a five-page introduction to the Ohio chapter. The chapter itself is broken down into regional coverage, with headings for Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Hebron, Lebanon, Logan, Painesville, Port Clinton, Portsmouth, Put-in-Bay, St. Mary’s, Sinking Spring (yes, Sinking Spring), Toledo, and Youngstown. Each of these headings is further refined with detailed descriptions of various nearby sites, boldfaced by Pettingill, and also boldfaced here.

### The First Edition

As we examine the first edition of 1951, we note the Cincinnati heading has eight birding areas described in some detail. We learn that **Spring Grove Cemetery** “is one of the best places [in the Cincinnati area] for year-round birding.” **Sharon Woods** also “gives gratifying results at any time of year.” **California Nature Preserve** is depicted as “an excellent place for summer-resident birds.” Brief mention is made of a large black-crowned night-heron colony, containing 150-200 nests, along the southern boundary of Greenhills. For migrant shorebirds and ducks, Pettingill recommends “the sand banks and bars” at the mouth of the **Big Miami River**. Further east, the mouth of the **Little Miami River** offers similar results, but just be sure to “[p]ark the car near the farmhouse on the west bank and ask permission there to walk downstream by way of dirt roads through cornfields for about one mile to the woods at the mouth of the River.” Probably the best spot on the Ohio River for waterfowl is the stretch “between **Pond Run Creek** and **Twelve Mile Creek**,” some 20 miles southeast of Cincinnati. Finally, he recommends “a series of gravel-pit lakes, known collectively as the **Remington Gravel Pits**,” near the town of Remington, which serve as “a choice spot” for loons, grebes, and diving ducks.

In the Cleveland area, the first edition devotes one paragraph each to the **North Chagrin, Rocky River, and Hinckley Reservations** of the Cleveland Metropolitan Park System; of course, there is the obligatory Hinckley turkey vulture reference. The Cleveland lakefront curiously rates only one paragraph, with mentions of **Gordon Park, Edgewater Park**, and the hot water outlet at East 71<sup>st</sup> Street (now usually referred to as East 72<sup>nd</sup> Street). **Shaker Lakes** also receives one paragraph, with equal emphasis on waterbirds and landbirds (one sentence each).

Eight Columbus sites rate boldface mention. **Greenlawn Cemetery** is “[o]ne of the outstanding places for transient landbirds” in the area. Transient waterfowl are to



be looked for on the **Scioto River. O'Shaughnessy Reservoir**, "a favorite area for Columbus bird finders," rates three paragraphs, and one learns that "one may count on seeing 25 different species" of waterbirds during migrations in March and November. I confess to having never heard of **Jeffery Park** and **Flint Ravine**, which receive one paragraph each. Columbus Metropolitan Park District properties include **Highbanks** ("an inviting, undisturbed wilderness"), **Blendon Woods**, and **Blacklick Woods**, "a splendid relic of the original forest cover," often spoken of by local birders "in glowing terms."

The only focus of the Hebron heading is **Buckeye Lake**, meriting no less than seven paragraphs, including one regarding the shallow eastern end of the lake, where least bitterns and king rails nest in the "vast cattail marsh." The lake is also haven for a "surprising number of waterfowl" during migrations; hopefully, one could arrange a visit during late October and early November, "the time for Canada Geese."

The **Fort Ancient State Memorial** near Lebanon is deemed noteworthy due to a variety of nesting species "near the northern limits of their ranges," including black vulture, summer tanager, Bewick's wren, northern mockingbird, white-eyed vireo, Kentucky warbler, and yellow-breasted chat.

The area judged "without question the best place in central Ohio for a wide variety of landbirds in any season" is the **Hocking County State Parks**, better known to birders as the "Sugar Grove Region." It is home to "deep narrow gorges with cliffs of massive coarse-grained sandstone, cool ravines, fascinating caves, lovely waterfalls, and magnificent forests." Although the area has lost the Bewick's wrens and (Bachman's) pine-woods sparrows then reported to be present, the remainder of the description surely still rings true today.

Painesville sports the area then known as **Black Brook**, but better known today as Mentor Marsh and Mentor Headlands. Although the marsh has certainly been degraded, the "varied habitats and the tendency of birds moving northward to 'bunch up' on the Lake Erie shore" are still valid, as is the statement that "it is not unusual to find here, in the course of two hours, well over 100 species."

**East Harbor State Park** near Port Clinton rates one paragraph. Things seem to have changed there, though: "boats may be rented for exploring the marsh, where, in May and June, Pied-billed Grebes, Black-crowned Night-Herons, American Bitterns, Least Bitterns, Mallards, Black Ducks, King Rails, Virginia Rails, Soras, Black Terns, Long-billed Marsh Wrens, and Red-wings can be found." Today, there is really no marsh to speak of, although mallards and red-winged blackbirds can still be found there, if you should so desire.

Have you visited **Roosevelt State Park** near Portsmouth? The answer is "yes" if you have birded Shawnee State Forest, as we now know it. Undoubtedly, its "cover of second-growth trees" has matured over the years. **Ohio Brush Creek** is also listed under the Portsmouth heading; the bird finder is directed here to "the only known place in Ohio where one may find Chuck-will's-widows." Perhaps this is not the *only* place anymore, but it is still the traditional favorite.

The vicinity of Put-in-Bay gets three bold-facings. **South Bass Island** rates two paragraphs, where the "outstanding ornithological attractions...are the hawk and small landbird migrations." While hawk movements are "impressive only in the spring," the landbird movement, "though very spotty in both spring and fall, is best

observed between 1 May and 20 May, 20 September and 10 October, during the first three hours of daylight on cloudy, windy, or rainy days." Pettingill adds "strangely enough, the directions of the flights both in the spring and in the fall depends on the direction of the wind. If the wind is from the north, the birds fly northward; if the wind is from the south, they fly southward." Presumably this still holds true today, but has anyone noticed this in recent years? **Kelleys Island** is mentioned primarily for "two cattail marshes known as Kelley's Pond (near the village on the south shore) and Carp Pond (near the west shore)." **Middle Bass Island** boasts "three fine marshy areas." Just southeast of South Bass lies "a limestone islet called **Starve Island**," home to a common tern nesting colony.

"Probably the best area for year-round bird finding in west-central Ohio is **Lake St. Marys**"; indeed, it rates four paragraphs in this edition. Again, we read a long list of long-lost marsh nesters, and landbirds "ranging from Ring-necked Pheasants and Upland Plovers to Dickcissels and Grasshopper Sparrows" are noted as being "prevalent in the rich farmlands around the Lake." The State Fish Hatchery at the eastern end of the Lake was also worth a stop then, as now.

Under the next heading, a whopping five paragraphs are devoted to **Fort Hill State Memorial** near Sinking Spring. When is the last time anyone has reported from this site? How do we know that the "fairly common" Bewick's wren and the "several pairs" of Bachman's sparrows are no longer present? If you do go, and find even *one* Bachman's sparrow, please let me know.

Toledo's **Oak Openings Park** rates three thick paragraphs. Here one must beware the "abundant and aggressive" mosquito population; indeed, "[m]ore than one bird finder has walked hopefully into the Oak Openings and has been forced to retire in disorder because he was not suitably dressed to withstand their attacks." Although the mosquitoes remain, unfortunately the golden-winged warbler, "nesting commonly here," seems to have disappeared as a nester, taking with it most of the hybrid "Brewster's" and "Lawrence's" warblers, listed as "seen here with unusual frequency." Lark Sparrows, then as now, are holding their own. Also, the rapids of the **Maumee River** still attract waterfowl and shorebirds when conditions are right.

"Members of the Grant M. Cook Bird Club...have unlimited possibilities for bird finding" in the Youngstown area, including **Mill Creek Park** and several nearby reservoirs: **Mosquito Creek, Berlin, Meander, Milton, and Guilford Lake**." The reservoirs are noted as "havens for numbers of waterfowl" in spring and fall, and for shorebirds starting in July. In fact, concerning Mosquito Creek Reservoir, "Members of the Cleveland Bird Club (Cleveland is 50 miles from Youngstown) consider this their best and nearest shorebird territory." Trust me, that's not the case anymore.

### The Second Edition

Twenty-six years passed between Pettingill's first edition and his second in 1977. Ohio still rates 33 pages of treatment, including five introductory pages. The major headings remain the same, save for the addition of Dayton, a switch of headings for Fort Hill State Memorial from Sinking Spring to Hillsboro, and the removal of Mosquito Creek Reservoir from the Youngstown heading to one for Warren.

Cincinnati gains several new sites: **Cincinnati Nature Center**, **Miami-Whitewater County Park**, and the **Anthony Meldahl Dam**. The old **Remington Gravel Pits** have transformed into the **Newtown Gravel Pits**, and the mouth of the **Big (Great) Miami River** has been expanded into **Shawnee Lookout County Park** and “an old oxbow” situated in the “extensive bottomlands of Indiana,” across the Great Miami from Shawnee Lookout. The old Ohio River sites of **Pond Run Creek** and **Twelve Mile Creek** have been mostly enveloped into the description for the Meldahl Dam.

The Cleveland area remains the same for the most part, with **White City Park** the only addition. White City was another dredge disposal facility hot for shorebirds in the 1970s, but it too has now faded into anonymity as its habitat matured.

In Columbus, **O’Shaughnessy Reservoir** went from “a favorite area of Columbus bird finders” in the first edition to not mentioned at all in the second, taking with it three paragraphs of its own and two more for the associated and mysterious **Jeffery Park** and **Flint Ravine**. However, two Columbus properties make their first appearance—**Sharon Woods** and **Darby Creek Metropolitan Parks**.

A Dayton heading was a surprising omission from the first edition, but two adjacent Dayton area sites appear in the second. **Aullwood Audubon Center** and **Englewood Reserve** account for four paragraphs total.

Under the Hebron heading, **Buckeye Lake** now rates only five paragraphs, down from seven. If someone were to prepare a new edition today, five paragraphs might seem overly generous. **Hebron Fish Hatchery**, “[a] satisfactory place for shorebirds,” makes its appearance in the second edition, rating a satisfactory one paragraph.

After shifting from the Sinking Spring heading to the Hillsboro heading, **Fort Hill State Memorial** still retains its Bewick’s wrens and Bachman’s sparrows in the 1977 edition. Actually, they probably had gone missing well before that date—but has anyone checked? (No, I don’t really suppose any remain, but if anyone happens to be in the area.....).

The Lebanon and Logan headings remain essentially unchanged. The Painesville heading now lists both **Headlands Beach State Park** and **Mentor Marsh** as separate entities, leaving the “**Black Brook**” designation behind. The second edition still notes the “unspoiled ponds and adjoining marshy areas” of Mentor Marsh; the same can hardly be said today, with tainted water and vegetation dominated by invasive plants. Curiously, the detail found in the first edition concerning the hefty migrant “bunch up” at the Dunes is omitted in the second. Certainly the birds still bunched up in 1977, as they bunch there today.

**East Harbor State Park**, under the Port Clinton heading, is still depicted as hosting healthy marsh bird populations in 1977. I’m not sure when the habitat there deteriorated to its present condition, but the nesting habitat today is certainly not conducive to any self-respecting bittern, rail, or black tern.

The Portsmouth heading now lists **Shawnee State Forest** instead of **Roosevelt State Park**, and the area has erupted from 15,000 acres in 1951 to 59,000 acres in 1977; more detail is included in the second edition to reflect this growth. Additional detail is also provided for finding **Ohio Brush Creek**’s chucks and whips.

The Put-in-Bay heading loses its **Middle Bass Island** listing, taking with it Middle Bass’s “three fine marshy areas.” **Starve Island** has also lost its common tern nesting colony, replacing it with a herring gull nesting colony instead. Bad trade.

At **Grand Lake St. Marys**, the southern edge of the Lake is still depicted as harboring good numbers of marsh nesters, although the comments regarding the noteworthy grassland nesters in the farmlands near the Lake are omitted.

An important addition is made under the Toledo heading with the inclusion of **Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge**. Here, the “stellar ornithological attraction is the assemblage of Whistling Swans in early spring.” I recall visiting Ottawa in the early 1970s for the official “Whistling Swan Day”; for some reason, however, spring swans have largely forsaken the area ever since. “Swan Day” was subsequently replaced with “Canada Goose Day”—another bad trade. It’s still better than a potential “Trumpeter Swan Day,” however.

Over in Youngstown, **Milton Reservoir** and **Guilford Lake** have both been omitted from the 1977 edition, and **Mosquito Creek Reservoir** has been shifted over to the new Warren heading. Such is life.

### Some Final Thoughts (Finally)

So is there a point to any of this? Let’s tally: of my choices for Ohio’s current top ten (top nine, really) birding hotspots (Conneaut, Headlands, Dike 14, the Crane Creek complex, Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area, Hoover Reservoir, Miami-Whitewater Wetlands, the Lake Erie islands, and Shawnee State Forest), only Headlands, the Lake Erie islands, and Shawnee State Forest (under the guise of Roosevelt State Park) are included in Pettingill’s 1951 first edition. For the second edition, we can add the Crane Creek complex, due to the addition of Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge. It is surely worth noting that many people’s choice for the best birding spot in Ohio, the Magee Marsh Bird Trail, is not mentioned at all. This area was purchased by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources in 1951, and in 1963 Laurel Van Camp established a ¼-mile bird trail at this site. The familiar boardwalk was dedicated in 1989. Elsewhere, purchase of land for Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area began in 1952, the property containing Miami-Whitewater Wetlands was purchased in 1989, and the dam at Hoover Reservoir was completed in 1955.

It is also essential that we note the degradation (or destruction) of the myriad high-quality wetlands listed in the two editions. Marshes at Buckeye Lake, Black Brook (Mentor Marsh), East Harbor State Park, on Middle Bass and Kelley’s islands, and at Grand Lake St. Marys have mostly disappeared or been compromised to the extent that they no longer resemble their former descriptions. Keep in mind that many of these wetlands were in relatively protected areas, and were all acknowledged as valuable resources by the birding community. We lost them anyway. It seems we still haven’t learned our lesson entirely, as the unfortunate Metzger Marsh incident springs to mind. But then again, several valuable wetlands have recently been created or improved, such as Miami-Whitewater, Pickereel Creek Wildlife Area, Big Island Wildlife Area and Sandy Ridge Metropark. Many great birding sites have come and gone since Pettingill’s 1951 first edition; by reflecting on what we had, what we have, and what we can hope to have, perhaps all that we have lost in the past will help us to gain in the long run. 🐦



# The Hummingbird Invasion of 2002: Issues of Identification

**James S. McCormac**

ODNR/DNAP, 1889 Fountain Square Court, Columbus, OH 43224  
jim.mccormac@dnr.state.oh.us

**Joseph W. Hammond**

224 Highbluffs Boulevard, Columbus, OH 43235  
kestrel@columbus.rr.com

## Introduction

Extralimital records of hummingbirds in the eastern United States are increasing in frequency, as are the numbers of species being documented. As of this writing, rufous-type (genus *Selasphorus*) hummingbirds have been reported from 33 states and at least 250 counties or parishes east of their normal ranges during fall 2002! While hummingbirds are quite easy to recognize as to family, and normally to species as adult males, subadults and females represent the majority of vagrants. Identification of these birds is often far from straightforward.

The ruby-throated hummingbird *Archilochus colubris* is the only hummingbird that breeds east of the Mississippi River and is common throughout Ohio. Ruby-throated hummingbirds normally return in late April and early May and, more significantly to those interested in western vagrant hummingbirds, depart by early October (Peterjohn 2001). Any hummingbird seen after mid-October in Ohio should be studied carefully, as it may more likely be one of the western species than a ruby-throated.

Ohio's first documented non-ruby-throated hummingbird was a rufous hummingbird *Selasphorus rufus* that appeared at a feeder on 15 August 1985 in Westerville, Franklin County (Peterjohn 1986). This bird was an adult male, as have been the majority of the approximately 14 additional Ohio records of this species since that time and before 2002 (Table). In addition, there are four records from 1985-2001 of birds that could be identified only to the *Selasphorus* genus (Table), which in North America is composed of rufous hummingbird, Allen's hummingbird *S. sasin*, and broad-tailed hummingbird *S. platycercus*. Broad-tailed was eliminated in all cases based on plumage details and structure, leaving these birds as either rufous or Allen's hummingbirds.

Ohio's relatively recent—lasting less than two decades—trend of increasing non-ruby-throated hummingbirds mirrors that of most states east of the Mississippi River. No one seems sure as to the cause of this invasion of western hummingbirds, but multiple factors are probably involved. Possible reasons include a proliferation of hummingbird feeders that attract birds to places where they are easily observed, and increased observer awareness of vagrant hummingbirds. Another factor may be advances in hardy flowering horticultural plants that hold their blooms later into fall and even early winter. Hummingbirds are extremely mobile, and it is possible that increasing numbers are being induced to stray eastward by these food sources.

Whatever the reasons, there is no question that more non-ruby-throated hummingbirds are being reported in Ohio, and 2002 has by far been the best year. In addition to the regularly occurring ruby-throateds, there have been nine confirmed rufous hummingbirds (Table), three rufous/Allen's hummingbirds for which we are awaiting further information (Table), and the first state record Calliope hummingbird *Stellula calliope*. In addition, two confirmed ruby-throated hummingbirds stayed in Ohio in 2002 until the record-breaking late date of 30 November.

Outlined below are details of three of these birds. Each example is instructive in its own way.

## Rufous Hummingbird *Selasphorus rufus*

### Logan County, 19 September – at least 31 December 2002

Until 2002, only two female rufous hummingbirds had been documented in Ohio. This bird (Figures 1, 2) appeared at the home of Donna and Tim Daniel in Logan County, and they immediately recognized it as different from the ruby-throated hummingbirds that also frequented the feeders. In addition to morphological features that differentiated it from ruby-throated hummingbird, this individual displayed the aggressiveness typical of rufous hummingbird (Calder 1993), driving off other hummingbirds and dominating the feeders.

As an example of how difficult identification of immature and female hummingbirds can be, one hummingbird specialist initially identified pictures of this bird as of a probable juvenile ruby-throated hummingbird. However, while its identification was not nearly so straightforward as that of an adult male would have been, when seen in the field this bird was clearly an immature or female *Selasphorus*.

Identification of *Selasphorus* hummingbirds other than adult males is probably one of the most vexing problems facing Ohio ornithologists. Even adult males are not necessarily straightforward: up to 1-2% of adult male rufous hummingbirds, for example, have all-green backs, a feature shared by adult male Allen's hummingbirds (Howell 2002). Diagnostic features as to species of immatures, adult females, and green-backed adult males are difficult, if not impossible, to discern without having the bird in hand. However, photographs may permit conclusive identification in some cases. In order to identify properly hummingbirds in any genus it is critical to age and sex each individual accurately. Ortiz-Crespo (1972) developed criteria for accurate



Figure 1. Adult female rufous hummingbird in Logan County. Note centrally located gorget feathers. Photo by Tim Daniel on 12 December 2002.



Table. All Ohio records of rufous or rufous/Allen's (R/A) hummingbirds.

Year	Date(s)	County	Species	Age	Sex
1985	15-18 August	Franklin	Rufous	Adult	Male
1986					
1987	23-30 August	Trumbull	Rufous	Adult	Male
	5-10 November	Cuyahoga	Rufous	Adult	Male
1988					
1989	9-10 August	Franklin	Rufous	Adult	Male
1990					
1991	25 July <sup>†</sup>	Guernsey	Rufous	Adult	Male
1992	15 October–1 December <sup>†</sup>	Lucas	Rufous	Adult	Male
1993	2 November	Clermont	Rufous	?	Female
1994					
1995	29 April–1 May	Lake	Rufous	Adult	Male
	11-14 September	Holmes	Rufous	Adult	Male
1996	18 September–26 October +	Wood	Rufous	Adult	Male
1997	4 January <sup>†</sup>	Holmes	Rufous	Adult	Male
	10 June	Lake	Rufous	Adult	Male
	early October–9 November +	Licking	R/A	?	?
1998	24-30 November	Lake	Rufous	Adult	Female
1999					
2000	6-9 September	Wayne	Rufous	Adult	Male
	5 October +	Ashtabula	R/A	?	?
	early November–12 December	Clermont	R/A	?	?
2001	6 November +	Adams	Rufous	Imm.	Male
	5-22 December +	Hamilton	R/A	Adult	Female
2002	25 August	Lake	R/A	?	?
	23 October	Carroll	Rufous	Adult	Male
	7 October–10 November	Holmes	R/A	?	?
	24 October–5 December	Carroll	Rufous	Adult	Female
	27 October–6 December	Franklin	Rufous	Adult	Female
	15 October–8 December	Hamilton	Rufous	Adult	Male
	late October–28 December	Clermont	Rufous	Adult	Female
	17 November–29 December	Hamilton	R/A	Imm.	Male
	19 September–31 December +	Logan	Rufous	Adult	Female
	? September–31 December +	Wayne	Rufous	Adult	Male
	? October–31 December +	Wayne	Rufous	Imm.	Female
	? November–31 December +	Adams	Rufous	Adult	Female

+ = undetermined length of stay; present beyond period cited.

† = specimen.

? = details unknown.

age determination of subadult hummingbirds that involve the extent of roughened corrugations along the upper mandible. Almost the entire length of the mandible is corrugated in immature birds, whereas adults have few or no corrugations. In addition, immatures show fresher plumages in fall than adults (Howell 2002). Diagnostic sexual characters are more difficult to determine without the bird in hand, as they involve wing-chord measurements, tail patterns, and overall size.

Certain details can aid in age and sex determination of *Selasphorus* hummingbirds with extremely good views or photographs. For instance, immature males tend to show more rufous coloration, especially on the face and rump, than females of any age (Heidcamp 1997). The throat pattern should also be examined. Throats of immature males are usually more patterned with extensive, uniformly distributed spots. They should also show some iridescent red feathers at the edges of the gorget during fall. Such feathers on female *Selasphorus* hummingbirds are usually concentrated at the center of the throat when present (Figure 1, Williamson 2001). See Stiles (1972) and Heidcamp (1997) for a detailed discussion on age and sex determination as well as information regarding intraspecific variation in *Selasphorus* hummingbirds.

Fortunately, the Logan County bird was captured and banded (band #R(4000)52347) on 26 September 2002 by Allen Chartier of Inkster, Michigan. In-hand observations and measurements showed it to be an adult female rufous hummingbird. Critical features included the relative lack of corrugations on the upper mandible, a wing chord of 45.85 mm, and a bill length of 17.9 mm. Additionally, this individual displayed seven iridescent gorget feathers concentrated near the center of the throat. Ruby-throated hummingbirds almost never show colored gorget feathers in female plumages.

Mitchell (2000) states that females and immatures of two *Selasphorus* species can be distinguished only in the hand. In-hand separation of rufous hummingbird from Allen's hummingbird is tricky, and depends on close examination of two tail feathers, R2 and R5 (Pyle 1997). In rufous, the tip of R2 is notched and R5 is between 2.8 and 4.0 mm in width. In Allen's, R2 is tapered or pointed and R5 has a width range of 2.0-2.7 mm. The Logan County bird had a notched R2 (Figure 2) and an R5 width of 3.49 mm, clearly establishing the identification as rufous hummingbird. In addition, its wing chord of 45.85 mm is beyond any Allen's, and in the range for female rufous (42.6-46.6 mm). Other characteristics can assist in the identification

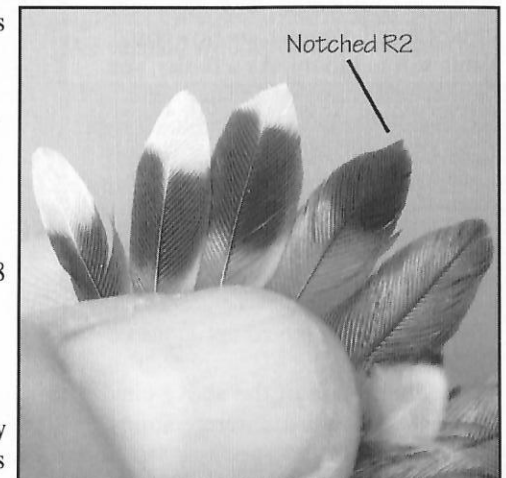


Figure 2. Diagnostic tail features of the adult female rufous hummingbird in Logan County. Photo by Allen Chartier on 26 September 2002.

of birds in this genus, and both Williamson (2001) and Howell (2002) discuss these in depth.

The possibility of broad-tailed hummingbird should also be considered, but this larger species is readily eliminated by the others' measurements, all well under what should be exhibited by a female broad-tailed. Furthermore, broad-tailed hummingbird shows a different tail morphology in the field, being noticeably longer and broader than the other *Selasphorus* (Sibley 2000).

The Logan County hummingbird provides an important contribution to Ohio ornithology in that it is one of few *Selasphorus* females indisputably proven to be a rufous. Differences between this species and its congener Allen's hummingbird are slight enough in females and immatures that the value even of high-magnification photography in the field as a tool to conclusively establish identification remains to be proven.

### Calliope Hummingbird *Stellula calliope* Ross County, 28 October – 1 November 2002

This was the first Ohio record of this species, and the first from the Midwest. Until 5 November 2002, when Pennsylvania documented its first record, no state adjacent to Ohio had yet recorded this species. There are few records east of the Mississippi River and north of the Gulf coast states, but Calliopes have also been found in Georgia, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Unfortunately, the Ohio bird was not widely seen, as it died while being banded and before permission could be obtained for the birding community to visit the site.

Jean Foor first saw this bird on 28 October 2002 as it flew around her suburban Chillicothe yard, apparently attracted to the numerous flowering plants still in bloom. As a birder, she knew a hummingbird so late in the season was likely to be something odd. She set up a nectar feeder the following day, and the bird was soon making regular visits. The next day, she notified local birder Bill Bosstic, who in turn emailed a few photos (Figures 3, 4) of the bird to McCormac and Michigan hummingbird specialist Allen Chartier.

As in the case of the above-cited rufous hummingbird, interpretations from photos can vary, and first impressions may depend on the type of field experience one has. Those, like banders, who are accustomed to identifying birds in the hand often apply very different skills and corre-

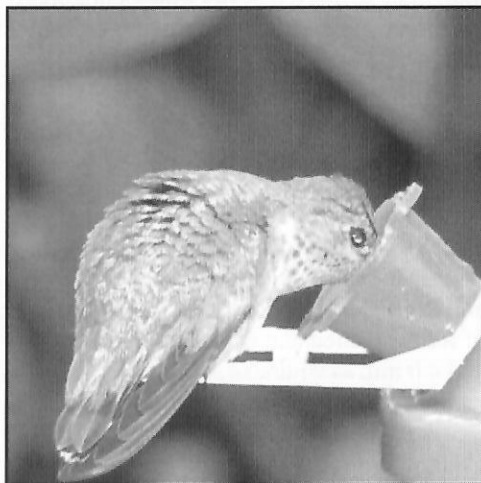


Figure 3. Immature male Calliope hummingbird in Ross County. Note long wing extension beyond tail and entirely dark spatulate-shaped central tail feathers. Photo by Bill Bosstic and Joe McMahon on 30 October 2002.

sponding ID criteria than do experienced field birders, who are more comfortable identifying birds at least in part by characteristics such as behavior, jizz, vocalizations, etc. In this case initial identifications of this bird, even based on photos alone, differed. Some, including most birders, thought it was a Calliope, while others felt it was most likely a *Selasphorus*.

A visit to the site, intended to verify the continuing presence of the bird, examine it further, and secure permission for the public to visit, was arranged for 1 November. Bosstic had also invited Chartier to Chillicothe, and he planned to arrive by noon the same day. On the morning of 1 November, the authors and others arrived at Mrs. Foor's home to find the hummingbird at the feeder, allowing close views for a minute or so before disappearing. It continued this pattern of returning to the feeder for brief feedings about every 20-25 minutes. About an hour later Chartier arrived, just after the hummingbird had made an appearance. After the bird had made one more visit, Chartier quickly placed his trap around the feeder.

After momentary confusion, the hummingbird figured out how to access the feeder by entering the trap, and was caught. All seemed well as Chartier worked with and photographed (Figures 5, 6) the bird, until with very few warning signs, the bird expired in his hand. It was confirmed via measurements that the bird was a Calliope hummingbird, confirming the conclusion most observers had reached after observing it visiting the feeder earlier.

So, was it really necessary to catch this bird to verify its identity? The authors do not think so. Given good views, Calliope hummingbird is one of the more easily identified among immature and female North American hummingbirds. The fact that most of the birders who viewed the photos (Figures 3, 4) prior to the bird's capture agreed it was a Calliope bears this out. Furthermore, observers were



Figure 4. Immature male Calliope hummingbird in Ross County. Note very slender bill, as well as long wing projection beyond tail. Photo by Bill Bosstic and Joe McMahon on 30 October 2002.

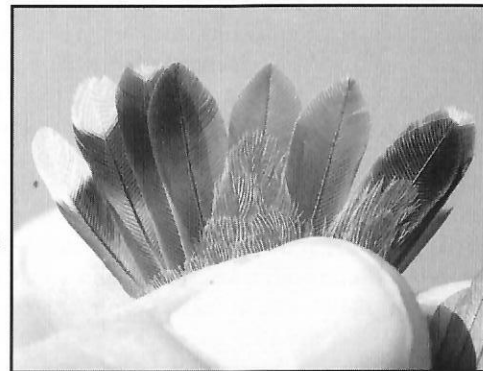


Figure 5. Tail features of the immature male Calliope hummingbird in Ross County. Note entirely dark spatulate-shaped central tail feathers. Photo by Allen Chartier on 1 November 2002.



in position to obtain close-up digiscoped photos, and no doubt could have gotten very good images of the bird prior to its capture. On the other hand, some felt that capturing it was the certain way to make a positive identification. These differing opinions probably reflect to some degree viewpoints often expressed by bird banders as contrasted with field birders.

No improper handling brought about the Calliope hummingbird's death, although the experience of being caught was probably the final stress that affected the bird. It did exhibit signs of ill health, such as drooping wings (Figures 3, 4), and there is no way of knowing how much longer it might have survived had it not been captured. The specimen, along with written documentation, was deposited with the bird collection at the Ohio State University Museum of Biological Diversity.

### Ruby-throated Hummingbird *Archilochus colubris* Franklin County, early November – 30 November 2002

This bird came to light when the homeowner, Glenda Payton, called a bird products store in Columbus on 17 November to ask about a hummingbird still visiting her feeder in Westerville. It had been present for a week or more. She reached birder Marcus England, who visited the site the next day, observed the bird, and obtained some digiscoped photos. England recognized it as an *Archilochus* and immediately arranged for a few local birders to visit, preparatory to working out understandings with the Paytons for the public to converge if a rarity was involved. On 19 November, McCormac and others viewed the cooperative bird intermittently over almost two hours, and England obtained more digiscoped images. The possibility that this might be a black-chinned hummingbird *Archilochus alexandri*, which would be a first state record, was at issue. While no one was willing to conclude it was a black-chinned, most were leaning that way. Later that day, England made his images available, and at least one birder stated he felt it was indeed a black-chinned.

Still, the consensus was that there simply was not enough evidence to allow for a conclusive identification, and observers considered having the bird caught so that diagnostic measurements could be made. In light of the recent Calliope hummingbird mishap, there was some reluctance to do so, and Hammond agreed to visit the site to obtain additional digiscoped photographs. On 20 November he took a number of close-up photos (Figures 7, 8) that showed features normally visible only with the bird in hand.

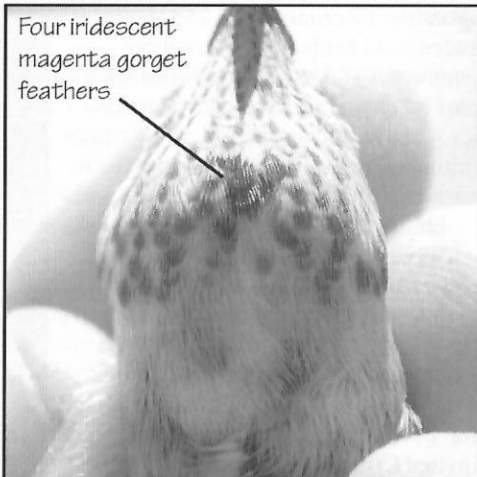


Figure 6. Throat markings of the immature male Calliope hummingbird in Ross County. Photo by Allen Chartier on 1 November 2002.

Based on these images, there is no question that the bird was a ruby-throated hummingbird. The crown color could be clearly discerned: it was mostly iridescent green, unlike the grayish color of black-chinned (Sibley 2000). Overall coloration of the underparts and back certainly appeared more like ruby-throated, as did the bill. But the clincher, and something quite hard to see accurately even through good optical equipment in the field, is the shape of the outermost primary (P10). In ruby-throated hummingbird, this feather is rather pointed and knife-like in shape, as opposed to the blunt, rounded P10 of a black-chinned (Baltosser and Russell 2000). In some of the photos, this feature shows up as if seen under a hand lens (e.g., Figure 8). Resolution of details establishing this bird's identity using this technique is instructive, as many experts feel that immature or female *Archilochus* hummingbirds must be captured to accurately determine critical features.



Figure 7. Ruby-throated hummingbird in Franklin County. Note relatively short, thick bill and whitish post-ocular spot. Also note drooping wings, partially closed eye, and tongue extending from bill. These conditions may be symptoms of an infection or lesions on the tongue or mouth lining. Digiscoped photo by Joe Hammond on 20 November 2002.

### Digiscoping

Throughout the history of birding, people have needed ways to verify and document the unusual birds they have seen. Until recent decades, collecting specimens was considered the only acceptable method of verification. As conservation attitudes changed and optics improved, the need to collect birds to confirm their identity began to dissipate. Spotting scopes soon became standard equipment for the average birder, and that average birder was doing more and more birding. As observers found more rarities, the need for photodocumentation became increasingly important. Standard 35-mm single-lens reflex cameras are excellent tools, but most useful only



Figure 8. Wing detail of the Franklin County ruby-throated hummingbird. Note diagnostic shape of P10, outlined in white. Digiscoped photo by Joe Hammond on 20 November 2002.



when the subject is fairly close. Nor do they perform well when used in conjunction with a spotting scope, as without an adaptor they cannot be used at all.

Soon people began carrying point-and-shoot cameras to document birds. A documentary photograph can be obtained by holding the lens of the camera up to the eyepiece of a spotting scope, but the results are uncertain and often of poor quality. Recent developments in both digital camera and spotting scope technology have opened a new door for birders. Users can obtain not only documentary photographs, but also images suitable for detailed examination of the bird itself, examination often not possible in the field.

The relatively new technique of digiscoping involves taking a photograph using a digital camera held up or mounted to the eyepiece of a spotting scope. A high-quality, large-aperture spotting scope coupled with a digital camera of similar capabilities can produce some surprisingly good photographs. One does not need the most expensive equipment, however, to obtain satisfactory photographs for documentation.

The ruby-throated hummingbird discussed above was photographed using this technique and would probably have been captured for identification had it not been for England's and Hammond's high-resolution photographs. Here details could be discerned otherwise visible only with the bird in hand. Hammond also digiscoped the other late ruby-throated hummingbird in Ohio this year, and its identity was also confirmed by the photographs. Will this method of photography allow some rufous/Allen's hummingbirds to be identified without trapping? Because many digital cameras have the capability to also capture video, we think so. Close-up photos of the bird can aid in determining its age and sex, and a clear photograph or video still of the bird's spread tail could further efforts to identify it. While we realize that many individuals may not be identifiable using this technique, we look forward to at least investigating this possibility next fall.

### To Band or Not to Band

Many feel the process of capturing birds during banding operations places undue stress and potentially causes unnecessary mortality, and this risk is too great considering the extremely low rate of return of banded birds. While this may be true for many groups of birds, banding hummingbirds—including vagrants—has yielded a fairly high rate of return. For instance, of 1929 ruby-throated hummingbirds banded from 1984 to 1998 in York, South Carolina, an amazing 243 were recaptured in later years, a rate of 12.6% (B. Hilton, <[www.hiltonpond.org](http://www.hiltonpond.org)>).

Apparently some vagrant hummingbirds in the east display remarkable site fidelity, visiting the same feeders year after year. Without banding, this fact would have remained unknown. Some interesting examples of recaptures include a rufous hummingbird banded in December 1994 in Picayune, Mississippi. It was recaptured the next seven years at the same location. A black-chinned hummingbird was banded in December 1994 in Gulfport, Mississippi and was recaptured the following four winters in the same yard. A Calliope hummingbird was banded and spent winter 1996 in Nashville, Tennessee. It was recaptured at the same location the next three winters. In Ohio, an adult female rufous hummingbird caught on 29 November 2002 in Columbus was found to be already banded. This individual was originally caught on 20 November 2001 in York, South Carolina as a hatch-year bird!

While there is no question that banding hummingbirds has produced fascinating data and has shed light on a facet of ornithology not well understood—vagrant hummingbirds—there are those who also believe that capturing these birds is in many instances the only way to identify them positively. This is debatable, and digiscoped photos of the Westerville ruby-throated hummingbird provide a dramatic example of how refined photographic techniques may be equally effective, and less invasive, in certain cases. Also, in instances where the homeowner will not permit the bird to be caught, digiscoping can be an effective alternative.

Based on the Chillicothe Calliope hummingbird incident, Allen Chartier has stated that his policy is not to attempt to capture a feeder-visiting hummingbird until at least one full weekend has elapsed after the birding community has been notified and given permission to visit the site. That way, all who wish to view the bird should have the opportunity to do so before any capture attempt is made. We feel this is a good compromise, but also believe that birders should continue exploring the potential of digiscope photography in these cases as well.

### An Issue Peculiar to Rare Hummingbirds

Many rare birds are accommodating enough to appear in public places, where access is not a problem and no special arrangements to visit need to be made. For instance, the 2002 Ohio roseate spoonbills *Platalea ajaja* spent months at a state park, and many hundreds of birders went to see them with no worries about making prior arrangements. But rare hummingbirds will invariably pose a peculiar set of problems regarding access.

In every case in Ohio to date—which until the Calliope had involved only rufous/Allen's—rare hummingbirds have been discovered in someone's yard visiting a feeder or flowering plants. In many future cases these sites will be in neighborhoods where an incursion of strangers with optical equipment will attract attention and perhaps even arouse the suspicions of neighbors.

It is imperative that when a potentially rare hummingbird comes to light, an advance team of birders—or a single individual—makes contact with the homeowners in order to seek access for the rest of the birding community. Even with such precautions, permission at times may not be forthcoming. In 2001 a rufous hummingbird frequented an Adams County feeder for an extended period of time, yet the owners were unwilling to open their property to the birding community. In most cases homeowners have been glad to allow visitation once it has been explained to them what is involved, but it is important to smooth the way and let them know what to expect, ascertaining if special arrangements for parking, hours of visitation, ways of accessing the yard, etc. must be made. Also, it is best to make sure the homeowner has time to let neighbors know that strangers may be prowling around.

We think Ohio will probably add more species of hummingbirds to the state list in the next few years. These additions will be easier for everyone if patience is exercised until arrangements have been made for visits satisfactory to the homeowner, and understanding in those few cases when such arrangements prove impossible.

### Potential New State Records

Which species of hummingbirds new to Ohio seem most likely over the next ten years? Perhaps surprisingly, the first species on our short list is one that does not regularly spend time in North America—the green violet-ear *Colibri thalassinus*. This rather large and showy tropical species typically inhabits high-elevation forests in Mexico as well as Central and South America (Newfield 2001). On occasion this highly sought-after species wanders into North America, where nearly 50 records exist, most of them since 1990. Texas, with more than 30 records, is the most likely place to encounter this species in North America, but the green violet-ear could appear anywhere. Records also exist for Alabama (1), Arkansas (4), Colorado (1), Kentucky (1), Louisiana (1), Michigan (2), Mississippi (1), Missouri (1), North Carolina (2), Oklahoma (2), Wisconsin (1), and, believe it or not, Alberta (1) and Ontario (1). Clearly, this species has a tendency to wander northeast. Given this affinity, and the species' occurrences in two states neighboring Ohio—as recently as 2002 in Michigan—we predict it is only a matter of a short time before a green violet-ear is documented in Ohio. While records exist for all months of the year but January, February, and March, the best time to look for this species is mid-May through July (Newfield 2001). Hummingbird feeders near pine plantings or oak forests might be the best places to search for this elusive wanderer. For a detailed treatment of this species in North America see Newfield (2001).

The second species on our list is one proposed, along with ruby-throated, as the identity of the 2002 Westerville bird: black-chinned hummingbird. This western counterpart to the ruby-throated hummingbird is a very common species, breeding from southern British Columbia south to northern Mexico (Williamson 2001, Howell 2002). While this species normally winters in western Mexico, it is increasing as a winter visitor to the southeastern United States, especially along the Gulf coast. Away from the southeast, vagrants have been recorded in Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Tennessee, Virginia, South Dakota, Ontario, Nova Scotia, and, most recently, New Brunswick (October 2002). While only one state bordering Ohio has documented records of this species, its increasing presence in the southeast during winter and its confirmation as an autumn vagrant to the northeast make this a likely candidate for an appearance in Ohio, especially after mid-October.


A third likely candidate for vagrancy to Ohio, Allen's hummingbird, has already been discussed regarding its similarity to rufous hummingbird. This species breeds along the Pacific coasts of California and southern Oregon and is represented by two subspecies. Nominate *Selasphorus sasin sasin* migrates to south-central Mexico in the fall, whereas the aptly-named *S. s. sedentarius* remains in southern California year-round (Mitchell 2000). As would be expected, it is the nominate migratory subspecies that has established itself as a fall and winter vagrant to the eastern United States in recent years. Like black-chinned, but far fewer in numbers, Allen's hummingbirds are rare but regular along the Gulf coast during winter. As a result of capture and measurement, this species has also recently been confirmed as a vagrant in northern Alabama, Delaware, north-central Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Tennessee, and Virginia. With continued effort to monitor late-season rufous/Allen's hummingbirds, Ohio will probably document its first confirmed Allen's in the not-too-distant future.

Two other species have recently proved to be long-distance wanderers in the fall and winter and could potentially make appearances in Ohio. Both Anna's hummingbird *Calypte anna* and broad-tailed hummingbird have shown a propensity for eastward vagrancy and should be looked for as well. With more feeders maintained beyond mid-October, observations of non-ruby-throated hummingbirds should increase. To increase the likelihood of the birding community being made aware of these sightings, we should all encourage our friends and neighbors to inform us if they observe any hummingbird after mid-October. In doing so, we have not only the chance to increase our knowledge of extralimital hummingbirds, but the potential to strengthen the relationship between backyard enthusiasts and the more active field-birding community as well.

### Acknowledgments

The authors wish to thank the individuals who hosted the hummingbirds cited: Donna and Tim Daniel (Logan County, rufous hummingbird), Jean Foor (Chillicothe, Calliope hummingbird), and Glenda and Jimmy Payton (Westerville, ruby-throated hummingbird). We also thank Allen Chartier for his work with these birds, and Bob Sargent for sharing opinions on the Westerville bird and for providing details on hummingbird recaptures. Thanks also to Marcus England and Bill Bosstic for arranging initial field visits.

### References

- Baltosser, W. H. and S. M. Russell. 2000. Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 495 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Birds of North America, Inc., Philadelphia, PA.
- Calder, W. A. 1993. Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 204 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, PA and The American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, D.C.
- Heidcamp, A. 1997. *Selasphorus* Hummingbirds. *Birding* 29:18-29.
- Howell, S. N. G. 2002. *Hummingbirds of North America: The Photographic Guide*. Academic Press, San Diego, CA.
- Mitchell, D. E. 2000. Allen's Hummingbird (*Selasphorus sasin*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 501 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Birds of North America, Inc., Philadelphia, PA.
- Newfield, N. L. 2001. Green Violet-ear. *Birding* 33:114-121.
- Ortiz-Crespo, F. I. 1972. A new method to separate immature and adult hummingbirds. *Auk* 89:851-857.
- Peterjohn, B. G. 1986. Middlewestern Prairie Region. *American Birds* 40:118-123.
- Peterjohn, B. G. 2001. *The Birds of Ohio*. The Wooster Book Company, Wooster, OH.
- Pyle, P. 1997. *Identification Guide to North American Birds: Part 1*. Slate Creek Press, Bolinas, CA.
- Sibley, D. A. 2000. *The Sibley Guide to Birds*. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, NY.
- Stiles, F. G. 1972. Age and sex determination in Rufous and Allen Hummingbirds. *Condor* 74:24-32.
- Williamson, S. L. 2001. *A Field Guide to Hummingbirds of North America*. Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, NY. 



# Some Thoughts on Big Days

**Greg Links**

7710 Fir Drive, Temperance, MI 48182  
harpy@buckeye-express.com

If you chose to read this article, then you probably know what a Big Day is. Some of you may be old Big Day warhorses, tried and tested over the years, while others may be young upstarts looking to future glory and fame. In case you have never heard of a Big Day, the concept is this: a team of birders (usually 3 or 4) locate and identify, by sight or sound, as many species of birds as possible within a pre-determined geographical boundary over a single day. The American Birding Association publishes worldwide results of these endeavors in their annual Big Day Report. State and provincial counts receive the most attention, but more and more people are doing Big Days by month, by county, head-to-head competitive Big Days, and "Big Sits," in which birds are counted from a single site during a single day. A standard state Big Day takes place over 24 hours, from midnight to 11:59:59 p.m., all within a given state's borders. Many individual accounts of these adventures have been written up over the years, and often are great reads. In this piece, however, I will share with you some key strategies for successful Big Days, identify a few common pitfalls, and hopefully aid you and your team in focusing on the right ideas for your next Big Day run.

I have Tom and Bob Kemp to blame for getting me hooked. The Kemp brothers are a household name in the Big Day world. Each year it seems, when the ABA publishes its Report, their names are found on more and more pages. The Kemps have been the common denominator in broken Big Day records in Michigan, West Virginia, South Dakota, and Pennsylvania. I was lucky enough to be the third member of the Pennsylvania team a few years back (it has since been broken again by locals). Tom and I also hold monthly Big Day records for a number of months in Ohio. Bob Kemp was an integral part of the team that recently broke the North American Big Day record in Texas (258 species!). We have fallen just short of records in other states and provinces as well, but still managed to compile lists respectable for out-of-towners (and good enough to cause panic among the local teams!). In other words, I have been lucky enough to learn from some pretty accomplished Big Dayers!

In speaking with Big Day aficionados across our fruited plain, the single attribute of successful or record-breaking attempts that rings loud and clear in virtually every case is organization! A Big Day is a *highly organized, well-planned* race to identify as many species as possible. Far too often, teams make the mistake of simply driving around to a number of birding hotspots, and listing everything they identify. Organization of a Big Day should be broken down into categories: route, timing, scouting, list management, and time management. These are not the only factors of course, but are mentioned time and again by those teams that hold the trophies.

A team's route is arguably the most important aspect of any Big Day. As Giff Beaton (Georgia Big Day Record-holder, as well as member of the North American record team) says, "no amount of scouting, luck, management, or good timing can

save a bad route." Your route will depend on the time of year you are attempting a Big Day. If you were looking to run a January Big Day in Ohio, your route will be significantly different than if you were trying to break the state record of 205.

Let's take as an example an attempt at a record run at the Ohio record, which would take place in May, to coincide with the peak of spring migration. There are two components to a May route in Ohio, the north and the south. Considerable time must be spent along Lake Erie, especially in the western marshes. Ducks, shorebirds, and other waterbirds are all targets here, and your route must go through good habitats for these species. The southern half of the route is more open to interpretation and freelancing, but the concept remains constant: that is, to *add to the northern species the southern birds you can't normally find along the lakeshore*. Species like summer tanager, Carolina chickadee, northern mockingbird, and a host of southern-breeding warblers are examples.

Perhaps surprisingly, a successful route during the peak of spring migration is based on breeding and/or territorial birds, not spring migrants. This is a very important clue for teams just beginning their Big Day careers. A route should be scheduled around the breeders, letting the migrants come as they may. A common mistake for new teams is spending too much time at migrant traps. While some time is indeed needed at a migrant trap or two, these should be relegated to mop-up duty only. *Virtually all record-breaking Big Days are worked around breeding birds that can be found and reliably re-found*. Therein lies the trick of the route; timing your stops at locations that host reliable breeders (northern and southern), and allowing some time for the migrants just passing through.

Scouting is almost as important as a good route. After a route is devised on paper, then it must be scouted as thoroughly as possible to see if it is actually viable. While all the scouting in the world may not be able to save a poorly planned route, a lack of scouting can absolutely ruin the best of routes. *You need to know exactly which birds are available on your route* (list management). Any scouting is better than none, but without question, the more scouting the better. There are different strategies for scouting different species, and it is important to be able to relocate truly "scouted" birds. For raptors, it is best to locate active nests somewhere along your route. Sometimes, scouting for raptors' nests takes place months in advance of the Big Day itself, when the branches are still bare. There may or may not yet be a bird present in its nest at the time, but it is vital to know where the nests are. Broad-winged hawks, for instance, are not normally on their nests in Ohio until late April, but it is much more difficult to find a nest when it is hidden among leaves. It is best to make careful notes on the location of every possible raptor nest site you find, and return a couple of weeks prior to your run to see what has (and has not) materialized in those nests. A raptor on an active nest certainly qualifies as a "scouted" bird, but that is pretty obvious.

Songbirds are trickier. A worm-eating warbler seen on the Magee boardwalk on 10 May is an obvious happenstance migrant, and should never be considered "scouted." However, a worm-eating warbler singing on a hillside at Scioto Trails State Park is far more likely to be relocated with some reliability. If the bird is singing or acting territorial in appropriate habitat in its known breeding range, it should be considered a scouted bird. You get the idea. *Scouting should be reserved for raptors or uncommon, rare, or difficult-to-find species*. It makes no sense to



scout red-bellied woodpecker cavities up and down your route, as finding this ubiquitous species is a virtual certainty. On the other hand, even though a red-tailed hawk may be a common species you might expect, it is important to have a nest staked out in case of inclement weather, because most red-tailed hawks don't like to fly in the rain and wind. It is best to scout marginal species along your route, those that could easily be missed without specific effort. Examples are Henslow's sparrow, blue grosbeak, and American bittern. Other marginals would be a host of ducks—while maybe not all that rare, finding a pair of redheads hanging out in a marsh somewhere would be a nice little addition to an Ohio Big Day list—and shorebirds. *In Ohio, ducks and shorebirds often make the difference between a good day and a great day.* Scouting will inevitably lead to little tweaks, or perhaps even major changes, along your route. This is fine, as long as you are decided on your route before the Big Day arrives, and confident you have enough species scouted to make your day a real hit.

Timing is key in any serious Big Day attempt. A date needs to be selected to coincide with the maximum number of species available along your route. The peak of spring migration is the logical time to attempt a record run in Ohio. While that sounds simple enough, consider how fickle and variable the timing of our spring migrations can be. Ohio's Big Day record of 205 was set on 11 May 1987. In some years, 11 May might be too early to expect the maximum number of birds. Some of the later-arriving migrants, such as the flycatchers, some shorebirds, Connecticut warbler, black tern and others may simply not be in Ohio by that date. Conversely, just a week later, migrants such as yellow-rumped and palm warblers could be scarce, and earlier possibilities like migrant golden-crowned kinglets and hermit thrushes may be gone completely. Knowing that a successful Big Day must be done at the peak of migration is one thing, but understanding the yearly variables and subtleties is something altogether different, and more difficult. If you are doing a Big Day during a month with limited bird migration, then timing is correspondingly less important.

The most important thing to remember is to time your Big Day to coincide with the most available birds on your route. A good sense of how many birds will be available may not be possible till close to the last moment. *It is best to have a range of possible dates for your run, and not a single pre-determined date out in the distant future.* This way, you will be able to select the best choice of dates based on weather, and your own last-minute scouting.

Once you have selected a range of dates, it is time to focus on the weather reports. Of course, weather is out of our hands, a matter of luck, but it is wise to pick the most promising weather day. During the spring months, waiting for a warm southwesterly breeze is important to maximize your possibilities. The best scenario is a southwesterly breeze with a low-pressure cell somewhere over Arkansas or Oklahoma. If you are extremely lucky (as in once-in-a-lifetime lucky), the weather can create fallout conditions, when earlier migrants are still around, and later migrants have already arrived. This rare overlap is the ideal situation in which to run a Big Day. Ohio's record of 205 was set under these circumstances. Species like yellow-bellied sapsucker and yellow-bellied flycatcher were seen together along the Magee boardwalk! Most experienced Big Dayers in Ohio believe that 205 is unbeatable. John Pogacnik, who (with Kirk Alexander) was a part of the record-

breaking team, offered these comments when I asked him if the record was beatable: "I'd be really surprised. Those were the days of Bayshore Power Plant, flooded fields full of shorebirds, and other hotspots that are no more."

Bill Whan of Columbus is only slightly more optimistic than most: "Theoretically, given a favorable coincidence of the important influences, including team members with excellent ears and knowledge of bird vocalizations, this number can be surpassed with a maximal route. Even given a first-rate team with flexibility to leave on any day within a two-week period, this number might be beatable only once in 10 years. I believe an extra boost can be given to such a team if the whole community of birders in the state mobilized to help them—primarily by notifying them day-to-day of the presence of critical scarce birds, nesters or not (e.g., oddballs like Bell's vireo, western meadowlark, blue grosbeak, etc., unusual late waterfowl, odd shorebirds, raptors, barn owls, yellow-crowned night-herons, etc., etc.) near a projected route. A statewide system of stakeouts would help a lot. In addition, we recommend the use of "ethical ticks," whereby a bird can be counted without disturbing it (example: we counted yellow-crowned night-heron this year by driving by dark to within 20 yards of the known and recently-scouted location of nesting birds, quietly waiting for the amount of time it would have taken us to get out, blind them with floodlights, bang on the tree-trunk to flush and identify them, then leaving without disturbing them)."

Perhaps 205 will never be broken, but if it is it will certainly fall on a remarkable weather day. *Luck with weather can make or break any Big Day attempt.*

Without question, there are other considerations when undertaking these endeavors. Good ethics is all-important on a Big Day—see the previously mentioned "ethical tick" scenario. The use of tapes is a hotly-debated topic among the birding community, and one I will not consider here except to say that it is my opinion that tapes can be used responsibly for most species. Having a good set of ears, and experience with songs and call notes, is invaluable during the warmer months, but less important later in fall and in the winter. In the "things to avoid" category, I heard of three that warrant mentioning here: looking into the sun, police, and Bellevue, OH (trains!) — (T. Kemp, B. Whan, pers. comm.). We would all be wise to heed this advice.

Birdwatchers have been doing Big Days for a long time, and I wish I had more space in this article to discuss some of the first recorded Big Days, which took place right here in Ohio in the early years of the twentieth century. Big Days offer knowledge uncommonly attained elsewhere—of the subtleties of migration, habitat preferences, and birds' ranges. In addition, and maybe most importantly, Big Days are flat-out fun. Whether you are shooting for the mythical 206, or hoping for a century-run (100 species) in March, you are sure to have a blast. While the above is certainly not exhaustive on the subject, hopefully you can take a hint or two from this article and make your Big Days a little more successful. Remember, a house sparrow counts as one species just as a Pacific loon does, and records were made to be broken!

### Acknowledgments

The following people contributed to the preceding article: Tom Kemp, Bob Kemp, Bill Whan, Adam Byrne, Giff Beaton, John Pogacnik, Blake Maybank, Karl Overman, Tom Bartlett, and Jim McCormac. 🦋

# Ohio's Second Record of Roseate Spoonbill

**Lana Hays**

180 York Road, Walton, KY 41094  
lhays2@insightbb.com

This past summer and fall, Rocky Fork Lake near Hillsboro in Highland County hosted four immature roseate spoonbills *Platalea ajaja*. Their presence was reportedly first observed sometime in late May 2002 by Zak Jacobs, a college student employed as a summer naturalist by Rocky Fork State Park. Unaware of what they were or their significance, he let them go unreported. On 20 July, Judy Holbrook, an avid bird watcher who lives at the lakeside, observed them in the park's backwaters while looking for swans with her granddaughter. She photographed them on 22 July and notified park rangers and the Ohio Division of Wildlife in Columbus. All the same, the spoonbills remained undiscovered by the birding world until 25 August. At that time Ginny Fantetti, Rick Chanin, and Ken Phillips came to the area to release a rehabilitated hawk and do some birding at the lake. Fantetti quickly made an identification and Phillips photographed them. The discovery was then made widely known via the Internet. There had been only one previous Ohio sighting: an immature roseate spoonbill seen briefly near the Auglaize River in Defiance County on 24 September 1986. This report is based on my personal observations as well as those related in interviews with Holbrook, Jacobs, and other birders.

During the day, the spoonbills were frequently observed in shallow water across from the boat dock. They were also often seen in the early morning in the backwater across the road, roosting with egrets and herons. They were also seen flying in the evening to a marshy area across the lake from the area where they spent most of the day. Holbrook noted that they spent much of their time in the backwater when she first observed them, but by August the area had dried up due to the drought.

I observed the spoonbills at length during my weekly visits to the lake. In the morning they waded in the shallow water, foraging by sweeping their heads from side to side. By midday they would hop up onto a large log to yawn, stretch their wings, preen, and then nap by standing on one leg, each head turned back and



## ROSEATE SPOONBILLS

tucked it into the feathers of the back. During late afternoon they returned to foraging. They always remained among the herons, egrets, and gulls. Occasionally, they were harassed by a great blue heron. The spoonbills seemed less wary of boats and people than did the other birds. If boats approached too closely the herons, egrets, and gulls would quickly leave, flying across the lake. The spoonbills would be the last to go, and then moved only a little further down the shoreline.


One observation made on several occasions was that three of the spoonbills would remain together while a fourth ventured away. This often occurred when they foraged, prepared for sleep, or moved further down the shoreline. Holbrook told me she too had observed this behavior. As the spoonbills were often too far away to determine individual characteristics, I never learned if it was always the same spoonbill isolated from the others.

As October approached, the temperatures began to cool. I called the park office on 4 October to check the status of the spoonbills and was told they had been seen that day. As I drove to the lake two days later to make my weekly visit, I was concerned as the temperature had dropped from 67°F to 46°F the previous night. When I arrived I found only one spoonbill. I searched all the areas where I knew they had been seen and still could find only one. I met another birder who had been there several hours before I arrived and had also searched unsuccessfully for the other three. I immediately thought of the one spoonbill that so often spent time away from the others and wondered if this same bird had managed to get left behind. As campers often reported observations of the spoonbills, I stopped by the park office at the campground. I was the first to report that only one remained. I was informed that several campers had described unusual flight maneuvers the day before. In the evening, I was told, the spoonbills had taken flight with the egrets and gulls. They all continued for some time in a wide circle and eventually returned. No one had ever reported this behavior in the past; the very next day three of the four spoonbills were gone.

My biggest concern was the welfare of the remaining spoonbill. It no longer stayed among the other birds but rather distanced itself, moving farther down the shoreline. During the time when it would normally be foraging, it now either slept or stayed up out of the water on logs. A heron bullied it when it entered the water, forcing the spoonbill to move still farther down and up onto another log. I observed the same behavior on two subsequent visits. On 14 October I returned expecting the worst, as the temperature had dropped from 55°F to 31°F the previous night. To my surprise the lone spoonbill was back with the other birds and was now actively foraging. At one point it even held its ground against a great blue heron. Around 5:30 p.m. I witnessed something I will remember for a lifetime. Suddenly the egrets, the gulls, and the spoonbill took flight. They began to fly in a circular path. The diameter of the circle steadily increased, as did their altitude. They circled and rose until I almost lost sight of them. Then, wheeling as they had on the way up, they came back to earth. If I had to draw the pattern its shape would have resembled a tornado. Until then, I could never quite visualize what the campers had described from the night before the other three spoonbills departed.

The next day the last spoonbill was gone. Three days of searching turned up nothing. Then on 20 October the spoonbill was observed for the last time, in its usual place.



Many questions about the spoonbills remain unanswered. When exactly did they come? Where did they come from? What circumstances brought them? Why did they remain at Rocky Fork Lake? What prompted their departure? We can only speculate about some of the answers. If indeed they arrived in May, then perhaps they came with one of several storms that dumped one or more inches of rain. Why they stayed may be easier to understand. The lake met their needs. Fishes are a major component of their diet, and Jacobs remarked that after the May rains there was an enormous population explosion of fry in that area, unlike anything he had seen before. This bonanza of food, along with a suitable, relatively safe environment, and an array of bird species familiar from their southern home, was apparently ideal. As for their departure, the weather had turned much colder, the water level of the lake had dropped considerably, hunting season was underway, and the gulls and egrets were migrating. Simply put, it was time to go. 

They stayed so long. They were so reliable, so easy to identify at a glance. There were four of them, and they became a state park fixture like the big cottonwood tree or the campground store. They were a bit unreal, too, so pink, their bills so outlandish, their behavior so confiding. The locals called them "pink platypuses." For reasons like these, we may too often have taken them for granted, but theirs was a momentous visit.

The roseate spoonbill's US breeding range lies narrowly beneath the 30<sup>th</sup> parallel—along the Texas and Louisiana coast of the Gulf of Mexico and in southern Florida. It is a casual visitor as far north as South Carolina and Oklahoma in the east, and is irregular as a post-breeding wanderer in southern California.

Nearby, among our neighboring states and provinces, Indiana, Michigan, Ontario, and West Virginia have no records of roseate spoonbills; Kentucky has one, a bird seen 29 July 1989, and Pennsylvania has another, a record of a moribund bird on 24 May 1968. Farther away, New York has one record, a bird that spent 16 days in 1992, Missouri one that spent 18 days in August 1986, and Illinois has old and faintly dubious reports of a bird on 28 Apr 1887 and one in 1859. The species is also accidental in Missouri, Kansas, and Iowa.

How old were these birds? Spoonbills apparently attain fully adult plumage only by their fourth year of life. Most accounts of the field characters of different age classes rely on Bent's 1926 treatment of marsh birds in the US National Museum series. The standard field guides do not go into detail other than to distinguish young from mature birds. The Highland County birds did not resemble basic-plumaged adults, nor did they match descriptions and illustrations of hatch-year birds. Authorities vary in describing the field marks of intermediate plumages, and even though we possess numerous photographs of these individuals, it seems wisest to describe them simply as "immature" spoonbills.

This Ohio occurrence encompassed a documented 93 days (and perhaps many more, regrettably unconfirmed) at one site, by far a North American record north of its normal range, as was a group of four birds so far north. They also outlasted all other such North American records by staying till 20 October; only two days later Tennessee surpassed this record with the observation of a single bird in Cocke County on 22 October (observer M. Sledjeski); a mostly white bird, it was not one of ours. —Ed.

## Gannet Invasion in the Great Lakes: The Role of Storms

**Greg Miller**

6006 Inishmore Lane, Dublin, OH 43017

hawk-owl@yahoo.com

During the second and third weeks of November 2002, an extraordinary number of northern gannets *Morus bassanus* were reported in the Great Lakes region, with at least nine sightings of this species. Some surmised there were as many as a dozen birds at once in the area. Most of these reports came from Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, but at least three were from inland locations. At least four reports of gannets came from Ohio.

Bruce Peterjohn in *The Birds of Ohio* (2001) recognizes 19 gannet records along Lake Erie between Huron and Cleveland, three in western Lake Erie, and two from inland locations in Ohio. He cites four documented occurrences between 1990 and 1999. The Ohio Bird Records Committee's *Checklist of the Birds of Ohio* indicates 12 records of this bird since 1980. This fall there were as many reports of gannets in Ohio as during the entire decade 1990-1999.

Watching a long stream of gannets pass from one end of the horizon to the other in late fall, or seeing hundreds swirling in a big circle 50 feet in the air and diving headlong into the cold gray waters of the offshore Atlantic are among the unforgettable experiences of North American birding. Northern gannets nest in the Maritime Provinces of eastern Canada and most migrate south along the eastern United States to their coastal wintering grounds between North Carolina and Florida. A smaller number of birds continue around the tip of Florida to winter in the Gulf of Mexico as far west as Texas. A few birds linger in the North Atlantic during winter and a very few accidentally wander up the St. Lawrence River to Lake Ontario, and sometimes as far as Lake Erie.

The species is highly pelagic, generally staying well offshore, and is casual to rare inland near the coast. A small number of migrants appear in larger bodies of water near the coast, such as the Chesapeake Bay, during spring and fall. Offshore in New Jersey, as many as 50,000 of these impressively large seabirds pass by the Avalon sea watch every fall. Up to 2,000 gannets may fly by Avalon in a single day during peak migration.

This peak in fall occurs between the second week of November and the second week of December at Cape May. David Sibley, in *The Birds of Cape May*, states that gannets tend to avoid land and are "probably most numerous 2-15 miles offshore, where attracted to schools of baitfish." Further north, the bulk of gannet migration in Massachusetts occurs between mid-October and the first week of December. Many gannets winter off the coast of North Carolina's Outer Banks and are "...frequently seen just off the beaches...in spectacular plunges just yards away," according to John Fussell's *A Birder's Guide to Coastal North Carolina*. Gannets reach North Carolina by Thanksgiving and stay through February.



A young and inexperienced gannet or two may have turned the wrong way this year and followed the St. Lawrence River all the way to Lake Ontario and even Lake Erie. But the likelihood that all this fall's birds made the 800-mile journey to Lake Ontario and beyond to Lake Erie seems small. It is worth considering a weather-related phenomenon, the nor'easter, as an additional contributor to the unusual numbers of gannets found away from the Atlantic Ocean this fall.

Nor'easters are notorious for winter foul weather and can cause terrible damage. The winter storm of mid-March 1994, called by some the "Storm of the Century," was a nor'easter. It left more than 200 deaths in its wake and shut down 25% of the nation's airline flights for two days. Numerous other memorable winter storms have been nor'easters.

A nor'easter gets its name from the powerful continuous winds out of the northeast at the front (northern) edge of the storm. These storms arise from especially powerful low-pressure systems that form in either the Gulf of Mexico or the Atlantic and then move up the east coast. In the northern hemisphere, low-pressure systems (cyclones) spin in a counterclockwise fashion. These systems can pack as much wallop as a tropical depression. Some of the strongest nor'easters develop an "eye" like a hurricane's. Colder upper-level air and the association of fronts in the system, however, keep it from being classified as a tropical depression.

Nor'easter season falls between October and March. With winter changes in the jet stream, cold arctic air often moves south out of Canada to meet a nor'easter headed up the coast. This cold air comes from high-pressure systems rotating clockwise. When these two systems collide on the north side of the nor'easter, winds can intensify dramatically. It is not unusual in these cases for a nor'easter to produce gale-force winds of 50 knots or more. Additionally, the moisture-laden air of the low-pressure system is now mixed with the cold temperatures of the arctic air, producing snow.

Birders should be aware of the power of nor'easters in anticipating landfall of pelagic species in the winter. It is not unusual for hurricanes or tropical depressions to drive pelagic species inland. Nor'easters are often very large storms—one may drop snow in Boston and freezing rain in Virginia Beach *simultaneously*—and, like tropical depressions, may be hundreds of miles wide. Winds from the North Atlantic may blow over places as far inland as Indiana, Kentucky, and Ohio. The important effect of the nor'easter on migrating gannets, strong fliers as they are, is strong persistent side-winds.

From mid-November through this writing in mid-December, we have watched at least four significant storms come up the east coast. Recent Ohio winters have been quite mild overall and nor'easters have certainly had less impact than in the early 1990s. This winter some very powerful winter storms have affected the east coast.

Here are a few announcements on associated November rare bird alerts from other states/provinces:

*From the 15 November 2002 Philadelphia, PA RBA:* There has been a fantastic northern gannet show along the coast this week. Lots have been around and some of

the birds have been remarkably close to shore. Two birds were even seen over land in New Jersey, while in Delaware, one was seen as far upriver as Delaware City, while another was in with the snow geese opposite Shearneck Pool at Bombay Hook.

*From the 20 November 2002 Rochester, NY RBA:* Highlights from Hamlin Beach this week included...on the 18<sup>th</sup>, 2 northern gannets...

*From the 21 November 2002 Ottawa, ON RBA:* The fourth sighting this fall of a northern gannet came from November 15 a juvenile was flying down the Ottawa River between the Champlain Bridge and Parliament Hill and in other gannet news, the bird that was rehabilitated at the Wild Bird Care Centre was flown to Nova Scotia for release on November 17.

*From the 27 November 2002 Eastern Long Island, NY RBA:* At Montauk Point...the show of northern gannets on Nov 23 was spectacular, with clouds of birds of all ages (but noticeably short on first-year birds) that I estimated to number at a minimum of 5000.

*From the 27 November 2002 Buffalo, NY RBA:* ...at Port Weller, Ontario...two northern gannets were said to have passed by on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

The timing of these reports and the numbers of birds seen are more than coincidental. It appears birds were blown into the Great Lakes from the mid-Atlantic with the help of a couple of significant November nor'easters. It is not inconceivable that a gannet or two was blown into the St. Lawrence and reached Lake Ontario via that route as well. Wherever they came from, the gannets in the Great Lakes have caused quite a stir this season in birding gossip. So, having stated the case, how does one test the nor'easter theory?

Birders should watch the storm center of a nor'easter just as they do a hurricane's. An observer's best position is on the approaching edge of the storm, where the winds are stronger, preferably just north of where the storm center makes landfall. Here, stronger winds from water to land will increase chances for pelagic species. This is also a more risky location in terms of personal safety as well. Risking one's life is not smart, even in the pursuit of birds. Having acknowledged this, let's admit hurricane birding can be fun. Nor'easter birding should be considered with similar zeal. Don't forget appropriate safety precautions, too...

Some pelagic species may stick around for a day or two after the storm, while others, like gannets, may linger a few weeks, depending on open water and food sources. Any large body of water should be searched. When out birding on the leading edge of the storm, one's chances of seeing flybys increase. What other species should be expected? Not many folks go out birding nor'easters as they do hurricanes. Birders have only begun to scratch the surface of what might be seen during or immediately following a hurricane. I am not aware of anyone who has done any work on birds associated with nor'easters. I can imagine small birds like dovekeys making surprise inland appearances. What about other alcids? How about this year's eiders? I don't know. Maybe alert readers, now aware of the possibilities, will find some new Ohio goodies.

On a final note, if readers like me love to watch significant weather events shaping up without having to wait for forecasts, here are some additional suggestions

about nor'easters. Go to your favorite weather websites (there are many) and look for low-pressure areas in the Gulf of Mexico or off the east coast of Florida. If pressure millibars for an area register lower than 1005, you might want to keep a casual eye on it. If the pressure is below 1000mb, then by all means stay glued to this system.

Watch to see which direction it is moving and whether the pressure is going up or down. If it continues to fall, the storm will intensify. The closer the isobars (the lines measuring the pressure around the storm) are to one another, the more organized the storm cell is, and the greater the potential for strong winds. Is a high-pressure area approaching from the north or west? Will it collide or get close to the storm? Is the high-pressure area above 1030mb? If yes to all of the above, it will increase the power of the storm dramatically.

Finally, birders should consider what birds are in greatest numbers along the coast at the time of the storm. This would certainly be a major factor in what one might see with the storm passage. In the case of the gannets, we had two really good storms at a really good time for gannet migration peaking along the east coast. Together they made up an Ohio birder's "Perfect Storm." 🐦



Mid- to late November usually marks the arrival of purple sandpipers in Ohio. This individual was seen and photographed at Conneaut Harbor in Ashtabula County on 18 November 2002. Photo by Gary Meszaros.

## Recent Actions of the Ohio Bird Records Committee

**James S. McCormac**

ODNR-DNAP, 1889 Fountain Square Court, Columbus, OH 43224  
jim.mccormac@dnr.state.oh.us

This report was submitted by the Secretary on behalf of the Ohio Bird Records Committee, whose current members are Dave Dister (Germantown), Micki Dunakin (Paulding), Ned Keller (Clevess), Cal Keppler (Youngstown), Jay Lehman (Cincinnati), Greg Links (Temperance, Michigan), Bernie Master (Worthington), Jim McCormac (Columbus), Kevin Metcalf (Chardon), Larry Rosche (Kent), and Sean Zadar (Cleveland).

### Accepted Records

In order to be accepted, records require a minimum of nine accept votes from the 11-member committee.

**Northern Gannet** *Morus bassanus*—Cuyahoga County, 16 November 2002. Observers: Ed Schlabach, Kevin Metcalf; photographed. 13<sup>th</sup> record since 1980.

**Northern Gannet** *M. bassanus*—Ashland County, 4 December 2002. Found injured by Nick Thomas, later expired. Documentation and photographs supplied by Tim Leslie. 14<sup>th</sup> record since 1980.

**Northern Gannet** *M. bassanus*—Seneca County, 4 December 2002. Found injured, bird soon expired. Information and photos supplied by Mona Rutger and Vic Fazio. 15<sup>th</sup> record since 1980.

**Brown Pelican** *Pelecanus occidentalis*—Lucas County, 22 August 2002. A nebulous record, in that exact dates of stay are not known, and to our knowledge the bird was never seen by experienced birders. All scattered reports, of at least one pelican from the Western Basin of Lake Erie throughout summer and fall, originated from boaters and fisherman. Fortunately, a boater took a photo of the bird on the Toledo lighthouse that clearly showed it to be a juvenile Brown Pelican. Ohio's fourth record.

**Roseate Spoonbill** *Platalea ajaja*—Highland County, 20 July – 20 October 2002. Observers: Joe Hammond et al.; photographed. Ohio's second record. See article elsewhere in this issue for details.

**King Eider** *Somateria spectabilis*—Lake County, 27 November – at least mid-December 2002. Observer: Nick Barber; videotaped, photographed. About the 27<sup>th</sup> record in the last two decades.

**Common Eider** *Somateria mollissima*—Lake County, 3 November – at least 31 December 2002 (still present at the time of this writing). Observer: Haans Petruschke; later photographed. Ohio's second record.

**Mississippi Kite** *Ictinia mississippiensis*—Franklin County, 2 May 2002. Accepted after second round of circulation. Observer: Jim McCormac. Approximately the 12<sup>th</sup> Ohio record.

**Piping Plover** *Charadrius melodus*—Clark County, 16 August 2002. Observers: Doug Overacker, Troy Shively; photographed. At least the 44<sup>th</sup> record since 1980.

**California Gull** *Larus californicus*—Lake County, 3 November 2002. Observer: Larry Rosche. At least the 30<sup>th</sup> record.

**Calliope Hummingbird** *Stellula calliope*—Ross County, 28 October – 1 November 2002. Observer: Allen Chartier; photographed. FIRST STATE RECORD, species #412 on the state list. See detailed account elsewhere in this issue.

**Rufous Hummingbird** *Selasphorus rufus*—Logan County, 26 September – at least 31 December 2002 (still present at the time of this writing). Observers: Donna and Tim Daniel, Allen Chartier; photographed. This bird was captured, banded, and documented. Ohio's 15<sup>th</sup> record.

**Rufous Hummingbird** *S. rufus*—Franklin County, 27 October – 6 December 2002. Observers: Sandra and John Langendorfer, Allen Chartier; photographed. Bird was captured and documented. It already was banded, having been caught on 20 November 2001 in South Carolina as a hatch-year bird. Ohio's 16<sup>th</sup> record.

**Rufous Hummingbird** *S. rufus*—Wayne County, September – at least 31 December 2002 (still present at the time of this writing). Observers: Ruth Vandersall, Su Snyder, Bruce Glick, Allen Chartier; photographed. This bird was captured, banded, and documented. Ohio's 17<sup>th</sup> record.

**Western Kingbird** *Tyrannus verticalis*—Wyandot County, 9 August 2002. Observers: Charlie and Linda Bombaci; photographed. At least the 16<sup>th</sup> record since 1980.

**Loggerhead Shrike** *Lanius ludovicianus*—Wyandot County, 26 October 2002. Observer: Ronald Sempier; photographed.

**Harris's Sparrow** *Zonotrichia querula*—Fairfield County, 20-26 November 2002. Observers: Debbie Bradley, Joe Hammond; photographed. At least the 17<sup>th</sup> record in the last two decades.

### Records Not Accepted

Documentations received for the following reports received fewer than six votes to accept, and were hence not accepted.

**Red-necked Stint** *Calidris ruficollis*—Sandusky County, 31 July 2002. There has been only one prior record of this species in Ohio, on 21 July 1962. The overarching general concern nearly all members expressed regarded the conditions under which the bird was seen. Both observers who documented this bird noted that they were looking into the sun, and heat waves were at times oppressive and obscured the bird, which was about 50 yards distant. Only one observer had firsthand field experience with red-necked stint. Some details were not described, such as wing length, primary extension, and tail length. Much was made of the coloration—this being an adult in alternate plumage—yet there were some inconsistencies in the two descriptions, and some features such as the chin coloration were not correctly described. It was also felt by many that little stint *Calidris minuta*—even though more unlikely—could not be ruled out.

**Parasitic Jaeger** *Stercorarius parasiticus*—Cuyahoga County, 11 November 2002. None of the members questioned that a jaeger was seen, but most had problems with a specific identification and felt that the bird could be accepted only as jaeger sp. Some specific concerns included the following: no description of wingbeat style or undertail pattern; no mention of relative size in relation to nearby gulls; and upperwing description does not definitively eliminate pomarine jaeger *S. pomarinus*.

### Records in Recirculation

Having received between six and eight votes to accept, the following records are being recirculated.

**Piping Plover** *Charadrius melodus*—Wyandot County, 26 August 2002.

**Rufous Hummingbird** *Selasphorus rufus*—Wayne County, late October – at least 31 December 2002 (still present at the time of this writing).

**Rufous Hummingbird** *S. rufus*—Clermont County, early November – 28 December 2002. 🐦



The only Harris's sparrow of the season appeared at a Fairfield County feeder in late November. Digiscoped photo by Joe Hammond on 21 November 2002.



Present from 20 July - 20 October 2002, four immature roseate spoonbills at Rocky Fork State Park in Highland County provided Ohio with its second record. These cooperative birds were viewed and photographed by many birders during a record-breaking stay. Photo credits, clockwise from top: Lana Hays (14 September 2002), Bill Hull (26 August 2002), Lana Hays (14 September 2002), Dave Russell (31 August 2002).