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*The Ohio*



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

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

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

Seasonal Report Due Dates	Please send all reports to:
Winter (Dec.-Feb.) - March 25	Bill Whan
Spring (Mar.-May) - June 25	223 E. Tulane Rd.
Summer (June-July) - August 25	Columbus, OH 43202
Autumn (Aug.-Nov.) - December 25	danielel@iwaynet.net

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### The Ohio Cardinal

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**On the Cover:** This common eider was photographed along Lake Erie in Fairport Harbor, Lake County, on 8 January 2003 by Gary Meszaros.

## Winter 2002-03 Overview

**Bill Whan**

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Some said it was just a return to normal. Not so. The winter of 2002-03 was harsh, abnormally snowy and cold. Following November's unrelenting volleys of cold fronts, December's first week delivered daily departures from normal of -13, -4, -15, -16, -9, -14, and -11°F. And that was our mildest month. December had 17, January 22, and February 23 days of below-normal temperatures, with averages of -1.1, -4.5, and -5.1°F below normal respectively. Our winter birds are not much inconvenienced by air temperatures unless their food sources are affected, mainly by snow cover or the freezing of water. And there was plenty of both this time. Cleveland had more than 30 inches of snow in January (and 28 days of it), and Columbus over 26 inches in February. Aerial waterfowl counters reported their near-shore Lake Erie survey areas ice-covered from mid-December through the period in the shallow western basin. From mid-January on, the Ohio shoreline to the east was locked in brash ice and jagged floes except for a few transient leads and pools near warm-water outlets. Inland reservoirs by that time were thickly sealed in sheets of ice.

Lake Erie's nearly 10,000 square miles of surface never froze completely, but it was a near thing. Unusual numbers of waterfowl in swift water in the southwest quarter of the state probably consisted partly of birds driven south by ice and, later in the season, early migrants bottled up by it. At the Camp Dennison gravel pits in Hamilton County the cessation of quarrying, the prohibition of hunting, and by some point the sheer numbers of birds that kept water from freezing, contributed some notable records for the southwest. It seems the scenic virtues of this spot have attracted the attention of developers, and in winters to come we can probably anticipate only Canada geese and mallard X somethings at "Duck Lake Estates." Outflows of artificially-heated water at power plants in Toledo, Avon Lake, and Cleveland hosted good varieties of ducks, and excellent opportunities for observing them. Also quite easy to study there were unusual large gulls—so unusual that species that would be new for Ohio were reported by multiple observers. The OBRC will be studying the documentation of these and other rare gulls, but the rest of us were at least able to enjoy numerous glaucous and Thayer's/Iceland gulls in many (some might say too many) plumage variations at close range.

Rare review species documented for the OBRC or already accepted included northern gannet, Ross's goose, king and common eiders (both remaining from the fall season), black-headed gull, California gull, rufous hummingbird (from the fall season), rufous/Allen's hummingbird, and loggerhead shrike (also since last fall). Winter finches were hard or impossible to find, and followed recent biennial fluctuations. Half-hardy species seemed not much less often reported than in warmer winters. Pipits and sapsuckers put in noteworthy appearances, and certain warblers—ovenbird, yellow-throated warbler, and pine warbler—surprised us all. Golden eagles again wintered in Muskingum County, three of them this time for an extraordinary modern record.

Sixty Christmas Bird Counts—their results once again ably compiled by Ned Keller for this issue—took place during what were to prove the mildest weeks of the winter. As always, their results, presented here in full, play a unique role in describing the birds of the season, and in the Reports that follow we cite CBC reports only in especially significant cases rather than repeating them. Those looking for evidence of ravages of the West Nile virus—such as vindication of fall's often-alarmist predictions about plummeting raptor populations—will find decidedly mixed messages here.

The Reports follow the taxonomic order of the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the *AOU Checklist 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*; CVNP=Cuyahoga Valley National Park in *Cuyahoga* and *Summit*; Dike 14=the Gordon Park impoundment in Cleveland; EFSP=East Fork SP in *Clermont*; EHSP=East Harbor SP in *Ottawa*; eop=end of the period, in this issue 28 Feb 2003; 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*; KPWA=Killdeer Plains WA in *Wyandot*; LSR=Lakeshore Reservation in *Lake*; MBSP=Maumee Bay SP in *Lucas*; MP=Metro Park; m obs=many observers; MWW=Miami-Whitewater Wetlands in *Hamilton*; NWR=National Wildlife Refuge; OBRC=Ohio Bird Records Committee; ODOW=Ohio Division of Wildlife; ONWR=Ottawa NWR in *Ottawa* and *Lucas*; ONWRC=monthly bird census at ONWR; ph=photograph; PP=power plant; 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 blue-headed vireo and grasshopper sparrow sightings of 21 Jun 2002 (in Vol 25, No. 4) should have been credited to **Judy Hochadel**.

**Vic Fazio** pointed out to us an error in Vol 25, No. 4's treatment of mute swan: their first successful nest at Medusa Marsh dates from 1989, with another in 1994 (following a period in which fewer surveys were conducted), and nesting observed annually since that time; the first multiple broods were three in 2001, leading to last summer's five successful nestings. Success for mute swans, anyway.

### For the Record

Here are noteworthy reports from earlier dates in 2002 that for one reason or another escaped our notice:

**Cattle Egret:** One discovered in *Tuscarawas* on 7 Nov 2002 (**David E. Miller**) represented a first fall record for the area.

**Eurasian Wigeon:** A drake was discovered at ONWR on 3 Nov 2002 (**Tom Bartlett, Ned Bixler**) during the monthly census. 

## Winter 2002-03 Reports

### Bill Whan

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**Common Loon:** High count five at LSR 1 Dec (**J. Pogacnik**). One lingered at Huron 4 Jan (**G. Miller**). On 8 Jan, two were found trapped in shrinking open water, one in Rocky River, *Cuyahoga* (rescued 12 Jan *fide* **M. Stetz**), and one in *Union* (**J. Rockenbaugh**). A bird at Bayshore PP, *Lucas* on 21 Feb (**G. Links**) must have been an early migrant.

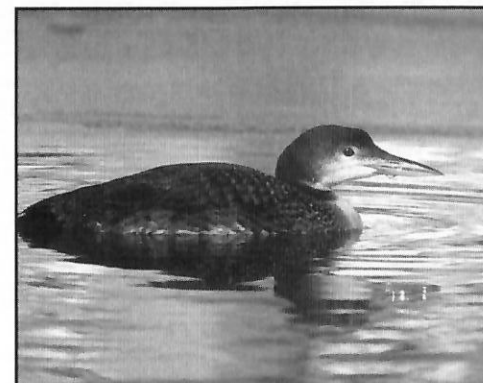
**Pied-billed Grebe:** A few toughed out mid-winter weather, with a remarkable 42 at Rocky Fork SP in *Highland* 4 Jan (**D. Dister**) and one 30 Jan in Zanesville (**C. Crook**).

**Horned Grebe:** A handful persisted. One was at Wellington Res, *Lorain* 2 Jan (**B. Morrison**), another at Rocky Fork SP 4 Jan (**D. Dister**), one at Avon Lake 31 Jan (**G. Miller**)-1 Feb (**V. Fazio**), and another at Camp Dennison, *Hamilton* 31 Jan (**S. Corbo**).

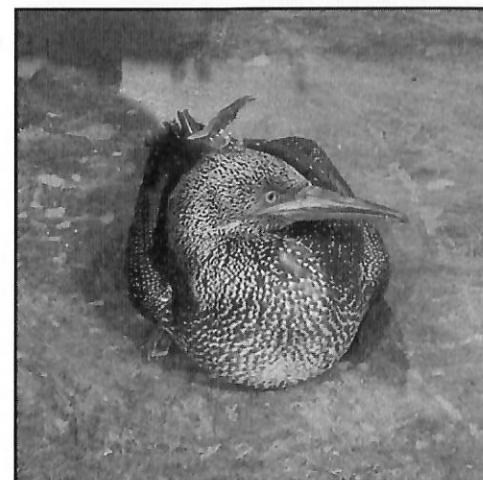
**Red-necked Grebe:** Notable was one 4-12 Jan (**B. Foppe**, m obs) at Camp Dennison.

**Northern Gannet:** Best numbers since 1947-48. First-year birds crashed inland in *Seneca* 3 Dec (**M. Rutger fide** **V. Fazio**, expired 4 Dec) and in *Ashland* (**N. Thomas fide** **T. Leslie**, expired 10 Dec). An imm at *Lorain* on the late date of 10 Jan was documented for the OBRC. Undocumented reports of other imm birds came from *Lake* 1 and 6 Dec and *Cuyahoga* 12 Dec.

**American White Pelican:** Quite unexpected was an imm seen 20 (**J. Stenger**) and 21 Jan in Dayton (**B. Foppe**); likely the same bird was found (**J. Hays**) over the Ohio R (thus in Kentucky) 24 Jan. Conceivably, the same bird was involved in an earlier sighting 24 Dec at GLSM (**E. Stahl fide** **K. Wolters**).



Nearly ice-bound in Cuyahoga County, this common loon was rescued and later released in Lake Erie. Photo by Gary Meszaros on 11 January 2003.



This first-year northern gannet was found in an Ashland County field on 4 December 2002. It was taken to a rehab center, but died six days later. Photo by Tim Leslie.

**Double-crested Cormorant:** A few stayed at warm-water outlets along Lk Erie, as three at Lorain 14 Jan (**J. Pogacnik**) or at Avon Lk 6 Feb (**P. Lozano**), or in open water further south, as one at EFSP 18 Jan (**J. Lehman**) or in *Morgan* 28 Jan (**C. Crook**).

**American Bittern:** **M. Troyer** documented one at Mt. Eaton, *Wayne* on 14 Dec; **S. Richards** found another in 8" of snow at Willard WA in *Huron* 29 Dec.

**Great Blue Heron:** Notable were 82 at Medusa Marsh, *Erie* 19 Feb (**P. Sherwood** *vide* **V. Fazio**); five nest sites had been claimed at the CVNP as early as 2 Feb (**D&A Chasar**).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Traditional Toledo winter roosts yielded only six (Toledo CBC 15 Dec). An adult was along the Cuyahoga R in Cleveland 28 Feb (**L. Gardella**).

**Black Vulture:** **L. Yoder** found four in NW *Coshocton* 15 Dec. CBCs for w. *Hamilton* found 19 on 22 Dec (**N. Keller**) and for *Cincinnati* 16 on 29 Dec (**J. Stenger**). **J. Fry** had 15 in *Fairfield* 13 Jan, **H. Nagy** 56 near the Granville, *Licking* roost 15 Jan, **D. Dister** seven huddled by the Hueston Wds SP lodge chimney 18 Jan, **B. Foppe** 30 from a *Clermont* roost 25 Jan, and **L. Dornan** ~12 near the New Concord, *Muskingum* roost 26 Feb.

**Turkey Vulture:** Late migrants included 30 at Hueston Wds SP 1 Dec (**J. Stenger**) and one in Trumbull 8 Dec (**D&J Hochadel**). In the absence of reports from *Athens*, the high count was 115, from Millersburg (CBC 14 Dec). Other roost counts included 23 near Granville 15 Jan (**H. Nagy**) and 20 near New Concord 21 Feb (**E. Snively**). Bizarre was one over Gordon Pk in Cleveland 3 Jan (**G. Leidy**).

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** One was at Clear Fk Res, *Richland* 12 Jan (**J. Herman** *vide* **S. Snyder**). Eight on 9 Feb at Cowan Lk, *Clinton* (**E. Roush**) ended at 10 there 15 Feb (**P. Gardner**).

**Snow Goose:** ONWR had 40 on 8 Dec, none on 5 Jan, 12 on 2 Feb, and 29 on 3 Mar for the census. At MWW, 34 were seen 17 Dec (**F. Frick**), and in *Delaware* 11 on 14 Feb (**B. Shively**). Forty-eight others were scattered over the period in *Clermont*, *Clinton*, *Franklin*, *Lake*, *Muskingum*, *Ross*, *Warren*, and *Wayne*.

**Ross's Goose:** An adult was s. of Dayton 11 (**D. Dister**) through 26 Jan (**M. Busam**, m obs); documentation is with the OBRC.

**Mute Swan:** Springfield Lk in *Summit* held 26 on 9 Dec (**B&D Lane**), the w. *Hamilton* CBC recorded its first ever 22 Dec, 49 were tallied for the Gypsum CBC of 1 Jan, 15 along the Great Miami R was a record high 25 Jan (**D. Dister**), 20 were in *Morgan* 28 Jan (**C. Crook**), and 23 in *Erie* 15 Feb (**V. Fazio**); this exotic species is doing all too well.

**Tundra Swan:** Over 1200 reported the first week of Dec statewide. Later ONWR, where some swans winter, had 81 on 8 Dec, 450 on 5 Jan, 21 on 2 Feb, and 93 on 2 Mar (ONWRC). Later birds may have dispersed from this or other locations, witness 31 on the Gypsum CBC of 1 Jan, 52 over Fairport Hbr 4 Jan (**G. Meszaros**), eight on Lake Pippen, *Portage* 6 Jan (**L. Rosche**), seven at a pond in *Clinton* 13 Jan (**L. Gara**), six on the monthly Kelleys Isl census of 25 Jan (**T. Bartlett**), five in *Champaign* on 25 Jan (**D. Overacker**), 13 over the CVNP on 29 Jan (**G. Leidy**), eight at Sheldon Marsh SNP 1 Feb (**S. Cagan**), and three at Killbuck Marsh WA 2 Feb (**S. Snyder**). Nine adults at BCSP on 21 Feb (**D. Overacker**) were on the way to the breeding grounds.

**Wood Duck:** The few later reports came from the south, so a drake near Wooster, *Wayne* on 15 Jan was noteworthy (**S. Snyder**).

**Gadwall:** Lingered southward, with 120 at EFSP 7 Dec (**N. Cade**) and 80 there 18 Jan (**J. Lehman**). A few over-wintered, witness six in *Champaign* 25 Jan (**D. Overacker**), 15 at Camp Dennison 1 Feb (**A. Oliver**), and 25 in *Greene* the same day (**J. Brown**). Up north, on 5 Jan the ONWR CBC had two and **J. Pogacnik** three at LSR.

**American Wigeon:** A few were found mid-winter in open water, such as one in Zanesville 30 Jan (**C. Crook**). Double figures over-wintered at Camp Dennison (m. obs).

**American Black Duck:** The ONWRC tallied 300 on 8 Dec but only single figures thereafter. The Columbus CBC counted 728 on 15 Dec, and ~900 were in fields in SW *Erie* 14 Jan (**V. Fazio**). EFSP in *Clermont* harbored 150 on 2 Feb (**N. Keller**), and by 18 Feb 1250+ could be found in *Erie* (**Fazio**).

**Mallard:** The fourth most numerous CBC bird at 38,242. High count at one location was 6500+ in SW *Erie* later on 14 Jan (**V. Fazio**).

**Northern Shoveler:** Persisted through 10 Jan in double-digit numbers at Camp Dennison in *Hamilton* (m obs), and **B. Morrison** discovered one at Summit Lk on 8 Jan.

**Northern Pintail:** Small numbers 4 and 25 Jan at Castalia were expected (**C. Caldwell**), but four drakes at Welborn Res, *Portage* 1 Jan were unusual (**B. Morrison**). Small numbers wintered at Camp Dennison (m obs) with a peak of 12 on 13 Feb (**B. Foppe**).

**Green-winged Teal:** Some were at Camp Dennison through 10 Jan, when 12 were seen (**S. Reeves**). At The Wilds, *Muskingum* on 31 Jan, **B. Morrison** noted four drakes, and **J. Watts** later that day eight.

**Canvasback:** No huge aggregations. At LSR, 315 passed by on 1 Dec (**J. Pogacnik**), ~700 were off Bayshore PP on 6 Jan (**G. Miller**), and on 1 Feb, **V. Fazio** tallied 200+ at Avon Lk. Up to half a dozen wintered at Camp Dennison (m obs). At EFSP on 2 Feb, 16 may have represented early migrants (**N. Keller**). Only 96 on CBCs.

**Redhead:** No large flocks developed, the CBCs tallying only 14 statewide. Over-wintering birds at Camp Dennison peaked at four 10 Jan (**S. Reeves**). On the move by 26 Feb, with ~50 at Avon Lk (**P. Lozano**) and 134 on 27 Feb at EFSP (**H. Armstrong**).

**Ring-necked Duck:** The *Cincinnati* CBC found a local record 558 on 29 Dec. At Wellington Res in *Lorain*, ~200 remained on 2 Jan (**S. Snyder**), and 26 were at Adams Lk SP in *Adams* 24 Jan (**D. Overacker**). Ten to 20 over-wintered at Camp Dennison, with a high of 30 on 13 Feb (**B. Foppe**). **B. Royse** kept track of a wintering flock on the Scioto R in Columbus that numbered as high as 150 in Jan and Feb. Up to six over-wintered at Lk Pippen in *Portage* (**L. Rosche**), who called 120+ there on 26 Feb "incredible."

**Greater Scaup:** ODOW aerial surveys found scaups in higher than normal numbers, though other duck spp were down. Close to shore, numbers of this species were less striking, with a high report of 170+ at Avon Lk 18 Feb (**V. Fazio**). The CBCs found only 190 statewide. Greater made a good showing in the southwest, with many single-digit reports and 16 in the Great Miami R in *Butler* 9 Feb (**M. Busam**) and 20 at EFSP 26 Feb (**F. Renfrow**).

**Lesser Scaup:** High count 600+ on 4 Jan at Huron harbor (**B. Whan**), and numbers low, at least within sight of shore, even at warm-water outlets. Six or fewer were regular along the Great Miami R throughout Feb (m obs). Twenty at EFSP 26 Feb (**F. Renfrow**) may well have been returning north.



This canvasback lounged around in the warm water off E. 72<sup>nd</sup> Street in Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, on 25 January 2003. Digiscoped photo by Joe Hammond.

**King Eider:** The last report of the imm male from last season came from Mentor on 18 Dec (S. Snyder).

**Common Eider:** An imm fem, first seen 3 Nov in Fairport Hbr, completed molting and was last seen as ice was closing in the harbor 13 Jan (J. Pogacnik).

**Harlequin Duck:** No Lk Erie reports. A female or imm spent 22-29 Dec in SW Toledo (M. Anderson, m obs), and probably the same bird reappeared at Weir Rapids on the Maumee 4 Jan (S. Lauer). S. Tackett (fide C. Mathena) found a fem and male in Dayton on 12 Jan, both were relocated regularly through 26 Jan (M. Busam).

**Surf Scoter:** About 25 reported, all along the Lk Erie shore, with high counts of 11 at Rocky River 9 Dec (P. Lozano) and of five at Avon Lk 8 Feb (B. Whan), where two on 26 Feb were the latest reported (Lozano).

**White-winged Scoter:** Fewer than 20 reported, most in Lk Erie. High count three 23 Feb at Avon Lk (J. Kuenzli). Inland, a fem was in Columbus 19 Feb (R. Thorn) and another on the same date (C. Mathena fide L. Theriault) through the 23<sup>rd</sup> (J. Lehman) in Dayton.

**Black Scoter:** About 15 statewide, all from Lk Erie. High count 10 on 9 Dec at Rocky River (P. Lozano), the latest 25 Jan in Cleveland (R. Rickard), with none reported in Feb.

**Long-tailed Duck:** All reports: two EFSP 4 Dec (B. Stanley), Lk Erie Islands census 16 Dec (J. Pogacnik), Gypsum CBC 1 Jan (V. Fazio), 4 Jan Bay View (C. Caldwell), 4-10 Jan Lorain (D. Sanders, m obs), 6-8 Jan Summit Lk (G. Bennett, B. Morrison), 15 Jan-6 Feb Avon Lk (L. Dornan, P. Lozano), 24 Jan Cincinnati (J. Hays), and 1-22 Feb in Butler (S. Fitter fide R. Cottrell, M. Busam).

**Bufflehead:** A near-record high count of 2143 on the Lk Erie Islands CBC 16 Dec was followed by monthly census counts there of 984 22 Dec and 545 25 Jan (T. Bartlett). Over-wintered at Camp Dennison, with a peak of 15 there on 2 Jan (B. Foppe). Ten were on the Great Miami R., Butler on 2 Feb (M. Busam).

**Common Goldeneye:** Unremarkable, with a high count of 2668 on the ONWR CBC of 5 Jan. At Bayshore PP in Lucas, 1050 were present 21 Feb (G. Links). Two were at the mouth of Killbuck Creek 28 Feb for an unusual local record (L. Dornan).

**Hooded Merganser:** R. Thorn counted 150 at Hoover Res 21 Dec, and L. Rosche 20 at Fairport Hbr 7 Jan. Their over-wintering numbers at Camp Dennison peaked at 10 on 10 Jan (S. Reeves).



This pair of harlequin ducks spent 10 days along the Great Miami River in Dayton, Montgomery County, this season. Photo by Frank Renfrow on 18 January 2003.



The Cedar Point causeway in Erie County hosted a photogenic flock of common goldeneyes on 23 January 2003. Photo by Gary Meszaros.

**Common Merganser:** The largest counts were 2750 off Huron 4 Jan (B. Whan), 1150 off ONWR 6 Jan (V. Fazio), and 3650+ in Erie 13 Jan (Fazio).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** High count came from 5 Jan, when 5274 passed LSR (J. Pogacnik). V. Fazio counted 4600+ over a couple of miles of lakefront in Erie on 9 Jan. Numbers fell off drastically as the Lake froze thereafter.

**Ruddy Duck:** Sparsely reported from the usual spots, the highest number by far the 85 on the 1 Jan Gypsum CBC. Four were around 5 Jan for the ONWR CBC, and L. Rosche reported up to six wintering at Lk Phippen in Portage.

**Osprey:** E. Snively reported the first returning bird at The Wilds in Muskingum 27 Feb.

**Bald Eagle:** Continues to increase. Notable counts included 63 on an unspecified date during the first half of Jan in Muddy Creek Bay adjacent to Sandusky Bay during an ODOW aerial survey, 12 (four ad) in one spot in river bottoms in Scioto 13 Feb (D. Todd fide B. Sparks), and a record six for the Kelleys Island census 25 Jan (T. Bartlett). ODOW's informal Jan survey garnered 304 birds in 45 counties, with 167 adult birds and 137 immatures.

**Northern Harrier:** Present in expected numbers: CBCs found 285, vs 200 last year, 295 the year before, and 315 the year before that.

**Northern Goshawk:** One was in northern Union on 26 Jan (V. Fazio).

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** Nearly unanimously, observers, contrary to widespread alarms about impacts of the West Nile virus on raptors in Ohio, report this and other hawks are flourishing. L. Rosche called it "very widespread, and continues to increase in NE Ohio."

**Rough-legged Hawk:** Perhaps a bit less numerous than usual, but with decent numbers in the south. High count was eight, at The Wilds in Muskingum 5 Feb (H. Nagy).

**Golden Eagle:** Present in winter continuously since 1996, eagles at The Wilds in Muskingum numbered three, one ad and two imm (A. Parker, m obs).

**Merlin:** ~Twenty reported statewide, with the high count three at Calvary Cem in Cleveland (L. Gardella, 26 Jan). A bird returned to Spring Grove Cem in Cincinnati on 9 Jan (N. Cade).

**Virginia Rail:** Spring-fed wetlands harbored several. The Millersburg CBC of 14 Dec located three in Holmes, as has become traditional. At SVWA, D. Dister discovered one 18 Jan, and by 26 Jan J. Lehman had found three at this site as well.

**Common Moorhen:** Highly unusual was one seen and documented by A. Barry et al. below the Hoover Res dam 15 Dec.



Cleveland's Calvary Cemetery in Cuyahoga County was a wintering location for up to three merlins this season. This one was photographed there by Gary Meszaros.

**American Coot:** Hung on at Wellington Res in *Lorain*, with 107 there 3 Jan (V. Fazio) and 40 on 12 Jan (S. Snyder). L. *Gardella* counted over 100 in the Cuyahoga R in Cleveland 24 Feb. Like many water birds, persisted into mid-Jan in good numbers at Camp Dennison in *Hamilton*, with 800 on 7 Dec (N. Cade) and 400 on 9 Jan (F. Renfrow).

**Sandhill Crane:** Over 2000 birds reported in western Ohio during the first two weeks of December, with a high count of ~500 over *Darke* on the 10<sup>th</sup> (fide R. Schieltz). Few reports were made thereafter, the most interesting of two in *Pickaway* on 4 Feb (J. Fry).

**Killdeer:** CBCs totaled 89, versus 960 last winter. Most deep-winter reports came from the south, with a single-site high of five from *Butler* 19 Jan (M. Busam). On 21 Feb, birds appeared in the north, with two at Bayshore (G. Links) and perhaps the same two at MBSP (V. Fazio).

**Purple Sandpiper:** Scarce. One brought observers to HBSP/Fairport Hbr from 1 (B. Barchus) through 19 Dec (G. Bennett). Two were seen on the Lk Erie Islands CBC of 16 Dec (J. Pogacnik), and N. Barber glimpsed one at E. 72<sup>nd</sup> St in Cleveland 19 Dec.

**Dunlin:** Two lingered at Walnut Beach, *Ashtabula* 7 Dec (G. Leidy).

**Wilson's Snipe:** High count was eight for the Millersburg CBC in *Holmes* 14 Dec. The same day four were at the *Cuyahoga* airport for B. Finkelstein. D. Overacker found one in *Clark* on 28 Dec.

**American Woodcock:** A rare mid-Jan report came from Woodbury WA in *Coshocton* (D. St. John fide R. Harlan).

**Jaeger sp.:** B. Barchus et al. spotted a distant jaeger at E. 72<sup>nd</sup> St in Cleveland 1 Dec.

**Little Gull:** Sparse. J. Pogacnik had one adult 1 Dec and two 19 Jan at LSR, as well as two each at Eastlake PP on 13 and 19 Jan. Another was at Fairport Hbr 21 Dec (C. Holt fide L. Rosche).

**Black-headed Gull:** An adult seen 19 Jan at LSR was documented for the OBRC.

**Bonaparte's Gull:** Peaked at ~6000 at E. 72<sup>nd</sup> St in Cleveland 14 Dec (L. Rosche). By Jan, peak numbers were ~1200 in *Lucas* (G. Miller) and 1082 at LSR the 19<sup>th</sup> (J. Pogacnik). A few, as many as 30+ (Rosche, 19 Jan) haunted E. 72<sup>nd</sup> St through Jan. Inland, remarkable were two at Rocky Fork SP on 4 Jan (D. Dister) and one at EFSP 25 Jan (D. Graham).

**Ring-billed Gull:** Began a retreat from Lk Erie in late Dec, and the w. *Hamilton* CBC could record a record 2455 birds on the 22<sup>nd</sup> (N. Keller). Last year the CBCs tallied 163,633, and this year 130,000, but numbers were way down after mid-Jan. Lynds Jones said in the *Wilson Bulletin* a hundred years ago that "the species has been all but unknown in Ohio," and such was the case once again after it got really cold.



This purple sandpiper occupied the breakwall at Headlands Beach State Park in Lake County on 8 December 2002. Photo by Gary Meszaros.

**California Gull:** An adult at *Lorain* 14 Jan was documented for the OBRC.

**Herring Gull:** Far more prominent than usual at the Lakeshore. Last year's CBCs counted 10,645, but this year 44,460, and they became more dominant as the winter progressed.

**Thayer's Gull:** Birds of all age classes widely reported from the Maumee R rapids to *Ashtabula*. High count three 22 Jan at E. 72<sup>nd</sup> St in Cleveland (B. Winger).

**Iceland Gull:** Birds of all age classes, dominated by young ones, widely reported from the Maumee R rapids to *Ashtabula*. High count four, 19 Jan at Avon Lk PP (B. Whan) and 22 Jan at E. 72<sup>nd</sup> St in Cleveland (V. Fazio).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** Present in good numbers. M. Anderson had four on 15 Dec in Toledo, and N. Barber four in Cleveland the same day. High count 10-12 in the Sandusky Bay area 1 Jan (V. Fazio), with eight in *Lorain* 14 Jan (J. Pogacnik) and six at Avon Lk 19 Jan (B. Whan).

**Glaucous Gull:** Many seen across the Lakefront, with high counts of 12 at Avon Lk 18 Feb (V. Fazio), eight-10 in Cleveland 24 Jan (K. Metcalf), and eight there 22 Jan (Fazio). Birds younger than adults predominated, as usual.

**Great Black-backed Gull:** As long as open water remained nearshore in the western basin, as many as 750 could be found near Sandusky Bay (V. Fazio, 1 Jan), but later the remarkable numbers were eastward, with nearly 1300 in *Lorain* 14 Jan (J. Pogacnik), ~900 in Cleveland on 24 Jan (K. Metcalf), and 1040 at Avon Lk 18 Feb (Fazio).

**Black-legged Kittiwake:** The E. 72<sup>nd</sup> St bird in Cleveland stayed through 12 Dec (G. Miller).

**Common Tern:** One straggled by LSR on 8 Dec (J. Pogacnik).

**Long-eared Owl:** G. Leidy had one at Dike 14 on 14 Dec, the Toledo CBC another the following day, and J. Pogacnik birds on 19 Dec and 12 Jan in *Lake*. One was at ONWR 21 Dec (J&J Volker) through 3 Jan (D. Frisk), J. Grabmeier found one at Lake La Su An WA in *Williams* 28 Dec, G. Miller one at KPWA 3 Jan (where T. Archdeacon found five 16 Jan), and K. Schieltz (fide R. Schieltz) another in *Darke* 14-20 Feb.

**Short-eared Owl:** First found at KPWA 9 Dec (R. Troutman), peaking at only three on 3 Feb (D. Graham). Birds at the VOA in *Butler* peaked at four on 16 Jan (S. Reeves). Five were at BIWA on 16 Jan (T. Archdeacon). The high count was six near Elkton in *Columbiana* 19 Jan (B&D Lane). One was in *Warren* on 21 Feb (A. Morrison).

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** Only one at a time could be found at KPWA 3 Jan (G. Miller) through 3 Feb (D. Graham). One stayed put in *Delaware* 20 Dec-6 Feb (J. Fry), and another was reliable at Gilmore Ponds, *Butler* 2 Feb-eop (M. Busam, m obs).



White-winged gulls put on a show at E. 72<sup>nd</sup> Street in Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, this season. This second-winter glaucous gull was digiscoped there by Joe Hammond on 25 January 2003.

**Rufous Hummingbird:** Unprecedented were eight from the previous period: the *Carroll* fem through 5 Dec (**D. Reed** *fide* **S. Snyder**), the *Franklin* fem through 6 Dec (**S. Langendorfer**), the *Hamilton* male through 8 Dec (**G&K Rodocker**), the *Clermont* fem through 28 Dec (**C. Johnson**), the *Wooster* fem through 4 Jan (**S. Snyder**), the *Adams* fem through 8 Jan (**C. Bedel**), the *Kidron* male through 14 Jan (**R. Vandersall**), and the *Logan* fem setting a state record for late stay of 18 Jan (**D. Daniel**).

**Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird:** A hatch-year male remained in *Madeira*, *Hamilton* through 29 Dec (*fide* **A. Chartier**).

**Hummingbird sp.:** Videotape from 21 Jan of a hummingbird in *Oak Hill*, *Jackson* was further unidentifiable; the bird had been present "all fall" (**M. Ball**).

**Red-headed Woodpecker:** Plentiful this season, likely as a result of a good mast crop, especially red and pin oaks and beech. High count 10 in *Clermont* 15 Dec (**J. Hays**). This season's CBCs amassed 293 birds, versus 154, 115, and 198 for the previous three.

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** Plentiful as well. Twenty-two reported, mostly in the southern half of the state, with the northernmost in *Lakewood* 21 Jan (**S. Wright**).

**Eastern Phoebe:** Reports after mid-Dec came only from the southernmost reaches of the state, and none from Jan there, but remarkable was a new late record for the *Toledo* area set by one seen near the airport on 5 Jan (**M. Anderson**).

**Loggerhead Shrike:** Seen by m obs during the period, the KPWA individual was last reported by **R. Schieltz** et al. on 5 Jan.

**Northern Shrike:** Somewhat less numerous this winter, reported in nine counties as far south as *Wyandot* (29 Jan **J. Brumfield**) and *Holmes* (24 Feb **L. Yoder**).

**Blue Jay:** 108 on the 5 Jan ONWR CBC was a record high locally.

**American Crow:** 12,000 were in *Springfield* for the *Clark* CBC, and 25,000 counted at the *Cincinnati* roost 23 Jan (**F. Renfrow**). The 1999-2000 Ohio CBCs counted 69,079, the 2000-01 CBCs 68,959, last year's 71,013, and this year's 39,978.

**Horned Lark:** High counts included a flock of 455 in *Sandusky* 6 Jan (**V. Fazio**) and ~1300 in western *Hamilton* on 15 Feb (**P. Wharton**).

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** Fourteen reported, nearly all from areas where this scarce breeder nested. The CBCs totaled 59 reports, vs. 433 last winter.

**Brown Creeper:** High single-location counts came mostly from Jan, topped by 6-7 at the *Greenlawn Dam* in *Columbus* on the 15<sup>th</sup> (**R. Thorn**); this winter's CBC numbers far outdistanced recent ones with 518.

**Carolina Wren:** The ONWR CBC reported a local record-high 24 birds on 5 Jan. Many reporters remarked on this species' ability to survive in deep snow during this season.

**Winter Wren:** Fairly widespread through the period, with most birds to the south. Three were at *Dike* 14, however, on 3 Jan (**G. Leidy**), and two on 15 Jan and one on 19 Jan at *Mosquito Res* (**C. Babyak**).

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** High single-point count 10 in *Cuyahoga* 4 Jan (**G. Leidy**).

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** Jan reports included two in *Rocky River* the 12<sup>th</sup> (**N. Walesch**), one in *Castalia* the 13<sup>th</sup> (**J. Larson**), and one in *Pike* the 30<sup>th</sup> (**G. Miller**).

**Hermit Thrush:** Twenty-five reported outside of the CBCs was above average in a harsh winter. Not all were in the south, witness two in the CVNP 12 Jan (**D&A Chasar**), and one the following day in *Castalia* (**J. Larson**). Further south however, **J. Grabmeier's** bird in *Columbus* 21 Dec was found dead 6 Feb.

**American Robin:** Most who mentioned the species regarded it as unusually abundant this winter.

**Gray Catbird:** The CBC total was 20 birds; for the previous three much milder winters the totals were eight, three, and four. The latest reported came from SVWA on 26 Jan (**J. Lehman**); there were no Feb reports.

**Northern Mockingbird:** Continued to be reported in steadily increasing numbers in the northern regions of the state.

**Brown Thrasher:** Ten reports other than the CBCs, mostly in southern counties, but one was in *Madison* 18 Jan (**B. Sparks**) and one at *HBSP* 16 Feb (**L. Rosche**).

**European Starling:** Their numbers constituted nearly 20% of all birds on the CBCs. They're declining in Europe, and we stand ready to supply replacements as needed.

**American Pipit:** This species may winter here more often than we detect it; snow cover this season may have concentrated them where they could more easily be found. The CBCs found 239 (vs. 108 last year, 59 the year before), and over-wintering seemed likely at least in *Fairfield*, where **J. Watts** had a flock of 33 on both 3 and 20 Jan.

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** A fifth winter Ohio record was a bird in *Holmes* 18 (**N. Lowe** et al.) through 19 Jan (**B. Morrison**). Subspecies was not documented, and photos seem inconclusive in this regard.

**Pine Warbler:** An extraordinary five birds were reported: in *Columbus* 9 Dec (**P. Gardner**), *Findley SP* 2 Jan (**B. Morrison**), 3 Jan *Gordon Pk* in *Cleveland* (**G. Leidy**), 3 Jan and previous ~two weeks in *Ross* (**B. Bosstic**), and also in *Ross* 30 Jan (**G. Miller**).

**Ovenbird:** A bird frequented a *Columbus* feeder 3-4 Dec (**D. Snapp**, ph) for a very rare record.

**American Tree Sparrow:** Normal in numbers and distribution. **L. Rosche** reported that "hundreds, if not thousands" wintered in *Portage*.

**Field Sparrow:** In good numbers, with counts highest from CBCs in the southernmost counties, as well as in *Holmes* and *Tuscarawas*.

**Savannah Sparrow:** *Ragersville* birders found 24 of the state's total of 28 for the CBCs. **B. Morrison** had one at *KPWA* 5 Jan and another 20-30 Jan in *Stark*. Two were in *Fairfield* 27 Feb (**J. Watts**).

**Fox Sparrow:** **R. Thorn** reported a very dusky-plumaged bird at *Blacklick Wds MP* in *Franklin* 4 Dec (later ph **P. Raver**) that appeared to be of one of the western races. Further north, one was in *Stark* 22 Jan (**P. Soehnlen**), one in *Parma* 15 Jan-eop (**D. Le Gallee**), and another in *Twinsburg*, *Summit* 16 Jan (**L. Rosche**).



This ovenbird was a little tardy in leaving *Columbus*, *Franklin County*. It frequented a feeder 3-4 December 2002 and was photographed by **Doug Snapp**.

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** One was satisfactorily documented for a rare record on the Cincinnati CBC 29 Dec (**J. Stenger**).

**Swamp Sparrow:** Found in good numbers in the southern counties and the Lk Erie marshes, and during Jan to the 26<sup>th</sup> at N. Chagrin MP (**K. Metcalf**) and on 2 Feb in the CVNP (**G. Leidy**).

**Lapland Longspur:** In fair numbers in the north, though large *Marion* flocks near KPWA failed to materialize. In the south, two were in *Preble* 26 Dec (**S. Reeves**) and w. *Hamilton* numbers peaked at five 15 Feb (**P. Wharton**). CBCs tallied only 208.

**Snow Bunting:** Resembled the previous species in occurrences. The southernmost report came from *Delaware*, with two on 25 Dec (**M. England**). **V. Fazio's** winter censuses found 140 in *Sandusky* 12 Jan, 315 in *Henry* on 14 Jan, and ~110 in *Wood* on 18 Jan.

**Red-winged Blackbird:** **L. Deininger** had 1000+ in *Wayne* on 9 Dec. Five singing males at MBSP 21 Feb (**V. Fazio**) were probably newly arrived.

**Eastern Meadowlark:** Sadly scarce as usual lately, with a high count of 20 on 19 Feb in *Hardin* (**V. Fazio**).

**Rusty Blackbird:** As usual, more plenteous to the south, with high counts of 75+ at Gilmore Ponds, *Butler* on 1 Jan (**M. Busam**) and 80+ in *Clermont* 23 Jan (**D. Morse**). The farthest north were two in *Twinsburg*, *Summit* 16 Jan (**L. Rosche**).

**Common Grackle:** The high count was ~15,000 at Camp Dennison, *Hamilton* on 12 Jan (**J. Hays**).

**Purple Finch:** Unusually scarce. The Cincinnati CBC, for example, found not a one, though they'd recorded it on 54 of the 55 previous counts (**J. Stenger**).

**Pine Siskin:** Scattered reports totaled fewer than 40 statewide, the high count of four coming from the Cincinnati CBC (**J. Stenger**).


**House Sparrow:** The ONWR CBC fell short this year, finishing fourth (after three counts in Canadian prairie provinces) with only 4694 house sparrows. Some consolation came from their 132 birds per party-hour, highest in N. America for the species.

## Contributors

We are grateful to the following birders who reported observations during the season: Chuck Anderson, Matt Anderson, Thomas Archdeacon, Hank Armstrong, Mary Ball, Nick Barber, Brian Barchus, Anna Lea Berry, Tom Bartlett, Chris Bedel, Ken Beers, Greg Bennett, Dan Best, Jeff Brown, Lori Brumbaugh, Don Burlett, Susan Burt, Mike Busam, Jason Cade, Neill Cade, Craig Caldwell, Allen Chartier, Ann Chasar, Dwight Chasar, Liz Clingman, Tim Colburn, Bob Conlon, Sam Corbo, Rick Cottrell, Tim Cottrill, Rich Cressman, Chris Crook, Becky Cullen, Donna Daniel, Leo Deininger, David Dister, Laura Dornan, Marcus England, Dave English, Jason Estep, Bob Evans, Ginny Fantetti, Vic Fazio, Duane Ferris, Bob Finkelstein, Sam Fitter, Bob Foppe, Frank Frick, Dan Frisk, Jim Fry, Larry Gara, Paul Gardner, Jeff Grabmeier, Darlena Graham, Don Hadley, Joe Hammond, Betty Hardesty, Rob



The first day of the season was a good one in a Columbus, Franklin County, backyard. This fox sparrow was digiscoped there on 1 December 2002 by Joe Hammond.

Harlan, Jim Haw, Jeff Hays, Stan Hedece, John Herman, Hank Hiris, Sally Hiris, Dave Hochadel, Judy Hochadel, Craig Holt, Jean Hoffman, Dave Horn, Cindy Johnson, Ned Keller, Ron Kolde, John Kuenzli, Bob Lane, Denise Lane, Jason Larson, Steve Lauer, Dave Le Gallee, Jay Lehman, Gabe Leidy, Tim Leslie, Greg Links, Doreene Linzell, Paula Lozano, Carol Lyle, Charlotte Mathena, Jim McCormac, Kathy McDonald, Kevin Metcalf, Greg Miller, Kevin Mills, Aimee Morrison, Ben Morrison, Donald Morse, Heather Nagy, Lach Ohman, Ann Oliver, Doug Overacker, Al Parker, Haans Petruschke, Ed Pierce, Ken Phillips, Bob Placier, John Pogacnik, Dale Reed, Scott Reeves, Frank Renfrow, Steve Richards, Richard Rickard, Bill Rinehart, Keith Robinson, John Rockenbaugh, Linda Romine, Mary Anne Romito, Tom Romito, Ed Roush, Larry Rosche, Mona Rutger, Dave St. John, Willie Sarno, Andrea Scheidler, Regina Schieltz, Ron Sempier, Paul Sherwood, Bill Shively, Troy Shively, Tim Smart, Elaine Snively, Su Snyder, Doug Snapp, Chris Spagnoli, Brad Sparks, Ernest Stahl, Bill Stanley, Jay Stenger, Michael Stetz, Sue Tackett, Rob Thorn, Dave Todt, Elliot Tramer, Roger Troutman, Melvin Troyer, Dick Tuttle, Tom Uhlman, Ruth Vandersall, Jack Volker, Janet Volker, Sandy Wagner, Suzanne Wagner, Norm Walesch, John Watts, Bill Whan, Pete Whan, Paul Wharton, Karen Wolters, John Yochum, Leroy Yoder. We gratefully acknowledge information received from the editors of *The Bobolink* and internet resources managed by Vic Fazio, Ned Keller, and Chuck Anderson. Special thanks to Allen Chartier for tireless labors and first-rate documentations for the season's hummingbird records. 



Unusual-appearing gulls were frequently encountered at E. 72<sup>nd</sup> Street in Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, during the big freeze this season. This beast, a possible adult glaucous gull X herring gull hybrid, was photographed there in January 2003 by Gary Meszaros.



# Further Afield

**Rob Harlan**

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I keep it out in the garage. I might use it only once a year, so it tends to get buried. For this column, I dug it out from under a pile of oily rags, after having jostled the weed whacker, lawn darts, and croquet set out of the way first. After a quick dusting and a few calibrations using my multivariate chrono-transducer, it was purring like a kitten. The “it” I refer to is, of course, my time machine.

Others might use their time machines to investigate a particularly intriguing period in history, to use advance knowledge to make a killing on the stock market, or to resolve a lingering “what might have been.” I, however, use mine to revisit the historical Ohio birding scene at exactly 10-year intervals. Go figure.

Elsewhere in this issue, Bill Whan covers the winter 2002-03 period; with the assistance of my time machine (and, I admit, through the guidance of various historical references), I suggest we begin our journey with the December through February period of:

## Winter 1852-53

*Millard Fillmore, our 13<sup>th</sup> President, keeps watch over 31 states. Under his administration, the Coinage Act of 1853 is adopted on February 21, allowing \$3.00 gold pieces to be minted.* The windshield of our time machine usually fogs over with any rapid descent into the past, and this excursion is no exception. Nonetheless, a quick swipe of the windows with my sleeve creates a small opening to the outside world—a world, apparently, when bird observers were as scarce as \$3.00 gold pieces are today. However, speaking of gold, we discover that in 1853 Mr. M. C. Read writes that “[t]he Rev. Sam’l Wright of Toledo, now deceased, wrote me in the winter of 1852 that he then had a young bird... which was quite tame, and a very interesting pet. It fully answered the description of the ‘Ring-tailed Eagle’.” Today we know this as an immature golden eagle. Read continues “After the death of Mr. Wright [the bird] was promised to the writer, but escaping from confinement [and] accustomed to only the voice of its old master, it could not be recaptured, and at last account was still lingering about the neighborhood of the city.” We’ll move on though, to...

## Winter 1862-63

*President Lincoln is Commander in Chief of the Army of the Potomac, an army whose attack against Gen. Robert E. Lee’s entrenched Confederate forces at Fredericksburg, VA on December 13 proves disastrous. This does not prevent Lincoln from signing the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1.* First fogged-up windows hampered our view, now we must deal with the confusion brought on by the “fog of war.” We can’t seem to find any significant bird sightings during this winter period; presumably most potential birders are involved in wartime efforts.

However, just before our time machine comes to a complete stop at December 1862, we detect the following report from the previous July. According to William S. Sullivan, “informed ornithologist” and “eminent botanist,” “a flock numbering from twenty-five to thirty made their appearance in the Capitol square [of Columbus] and remained in the elm trees... for a couple of hours, greatly to his enjoyment and the delight of numerous small boys.” Presumably most of us would have been delighted also, as this was a flock of 25-30 Carolina parakeets.

## Winter 1872-73

*The Presidency of Ulysses S. Grant is rocked by the Credit Mobilier scandal, and two members of the U.S. House of Representatives are formally censured on February 27.* There seems little reason for us to tarry here, as concern over that *Credit Mobilier* thing seems to have knocked the birding world into a stupor as well. The only report we can find during the period is of two black-capped chickadees collected in Cincinnati by Charles Dury. These specimens appear to have gone missing since then, so 21<sup>st</sup>-century birders have no way to confirm these extreme southern records. Keep in mind that black-capped chickadee is a Review Species in Kentucky, just across the Ohio River from Cincinnati.

## Winter 1882-83

*The Federal Civil Service Commission is formed on January 16, during the Chester A. Arthur presidency. In February, the Ohio River floods, cresting at 64 feet in Cincinnati.* Looks like another sloooow period; we can’t find any reports to investigate. Nothing to see here, move along please...

## Winter 1892-93

*The Benjamin Harrison administration offers amnesty to polygamists on January 4, but only if they agree to follow laws against polygamy in the future. Also, John L. Stevens, the U.S. Minister to Hawaii, helps overthrow the legitimate government of Hawaiian Queen Liliuokalani.* A more interesting period historically, perhaps, but still not so interesting birdwise. Nonetheless, in December, W. F. Henninger does collect two red crossbills in Seneca County, and donates them to the local Heidelberg University Museum. That was nice of him, because examination in the 21<sup>st</sup> century might reveal something about the racial identity of Ohio red crossbills in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. With the real potential for a red crossbill split in the near future, the past just might help us sort things out today.

## Winter 1902-03

*On January 22, the U.S. and Colombia sign the Hay-Herrán Treaty, providing for lease of a strip of land across Panama. Colombia, however, refuses to ratify this treaty, and later in 1903 the people of Panama declare their independence from Colombia and sign a treaty with the U.S. on their own. President Teddy Roosevelt watches with interest.* Things begin to pick up here. In Scioto and Pike counties, W. F. Henninger deems barn owl, Bewick’s wren, and chipping sparrow as “common” winter species. Loggerhead shrike and osprey are “fairly common”, and golden

eagle is “very rare.” Henninger also notes another interesting species present during this period, at least in captivity. He writes “[o]ne specimen was taken [earlier than the winter of 1902-03, of course] on the banks of the Scioto River, in Scioto County; in the collection of Mrs. Mary E. Bannon, Portsmouth, Ohio. One was kept in captivity for a number of years. It had been winged.” Unfortunately, we have no idea where the Mrs. Mary E. Bannon collection disappeared, as this whooping crane specimen would generate a great deal of scientific interest today, I suspect. Ohio has no official records of this species.

### Winter 1912-13

*President-elect Woodrow Wilson publicly opposes business monopolies in a January 11 speech. Lame-duck President William Howard Taft watches with little interest.* Lack of interest also seems to be the mood of most birders during this period, as we find very few reports to examine. However, a few sightings from a fledgling series of surveys known as “Christmas Bird Counts” do merit at least a partially raised eyebrow: a northern shrike on the East Liberty CBC, a bald eagle on the North Kingsville CBC, and two northern saw-whet owls in the Youngstown count circle.

### Winter 1922-23

*In January, in the midst of the Warren G. Harding administration, Florence E. Allen becomes the first U.S. woman to serve on a state Supreme Court—the Ohio Supreme Court, actually.* It seems that CBCs continue to grow in popularity; this period sees the Hillsboro CBC tally two Bewick’s wrens and 25 black vultures, while the Paulding CBC finds 12 gray partridges and Youngstown chalks up 46 pine siskins. It appears to be a reasonably good “winter finch” season, as Harold C. Jones deems purple finch “abundant all winter” in Oberlin. Apparently even more noteworthy to Jones (“President of [the] Cardinal Ornithological Club” in Oberlin, by the way) was “a Mourning Dove...seen near the lake on December 26.”

### Winter 1932-33

*President-elect Franklin Delano Roosevelt survives an assassination attempt February 15. For those keeping score, the 20<sup>th</sup> U.S. Constitutional Amendment is adopted February 6, while on February 20 Congress recommends the adoption of the 21<sup>st</sup>, but also the repeal of the 18<sup>th</sup>. In December, the Chicago Bears defeat the Portsmouth (Ohio) Spartans for the first National Football League championship.* Those hoping for winter finches and associates can look elsewhere—in Oberlin, “we haven’t a single record” of red-breasted nuthatch; in Wooster, “Northern finches have been absent”; in Toledo, “few birds such as the Grosbeaks came down from the north”; and in Cleveland, their “entire absence” is noted. William Baker, of Salem, notes a mourning dove on December 26 as one of the “high spots of the winter for me”. Finally, “A Holboell’s [red-necked] Grebe was picked up on a rural road southeast of Youngstown on February 16 and was identified by Dr. Brody. It ate a few minnows and newts but died after several days.” That would just about do it for me, too.

### Winter 1942-43

*With FDR still President, the U.S. launches its first solo WWII bombing raid over Nazi Germany on January 27. On February 7, the U.S. government begins to ration shoes—no more than three new pairs per person per year.* We note with interest Ohio’s annual tally of wintering ducks (47,864), including “54% blacks and 24% mallards. Also counted were more than 1474 Canada geese.” We really must begin to carefully examine the winter gulls, since “[n]orthern gulls are occurring more frequently in recent years along Lake Erie.” As proof, at least one great black-backed gull winters near Put-in-Bay, and another is seen at Cleveland. Once again finch-watchers are disappointed, as “[t]his winter brought few unusual observations of northern visitors of the finch family...”

### Winter 1952-53

*Under Presidents Truman and Eisenhower, the Korean conflict grinds on during the winter, before finally coming to an uneasy truce in the summer of 1953.* In Ohio, as we bask in “one of the Midwest’s warmest recorded winters,” we note that severe winter weather alone doesn’t mandate the Ohio presence of winter finches, considering the “great influx” of siskins and redpolls. Gulls continue to warrant close scrutiny, with the highlights being a little gull and a Sabine’s gull, both seen at Ashtabula on December 27 by Lawrence E. Hicks and Ernest Limes. In the northwest, “[a]s in the past, Laurel Van Camp found King Rails in Magee Marsh...More noteworthy is his January record of a Florida Gallinule [common moorhen] at the same place...”

### Winter 1962-63

*On November 20, just before the winter period begins, President John F. Kennedy calls off the U.S. naval blockade of Cuba. “Telstar” by the Tornados heads the Billboard chart beginning the week of December 22.* Bundle up for the “extreme cold,” including seven new all-time lows in Cleveland. Again as evidence that severe weather and finch invasions don’t necessarily coincide, very few finches are noted anywhere in the state or region. Keeping in mind our concerns over possible reductions in chickadee, titmouse, and nuthatch populations in 2003, observers in the 1962-63 winter period also report chickadees to be down, and titmice and white-breasted nuthatches “were also down from 50 to 75 percent according to all observers commenting.” Certainly West Nile Virus was not a factor then: maybe it is—maybe it isn’t—today.

### Winter 1972-73

*Five of seven men accused in the Watergate break-in plead guilty in January. President Nixon signs the Vietnam cease-fire agreement on January 27. The Miami Dolphins’ victory at Super Bowl VII on January 14 caps the only undefeated season in NFL history.* Even though “[m]uch interest has been given to the expanding range of the Monk Parakeet...” in the Midwest, and a Dayton feeder attracts one in early January, the “much interest” soon fizzles into “much ado about nothing” as further reports of significance are not forthcoming. Unusual gulls proliferate, with maxima of two glaucous, one Iceland, and 12 great black-backed gulls along Lake

Erie. Finches perform very well, including 253 evening grosbeaks on the Portsmouth CBC of December 31 and at least 10 pine grosbeaks in the Cleveland area during the period. A Harris's sparrow is outstanding in Marietta in February, but is topped by a boreal chickadee "banded and photographed" at Waite Hill, east of Cleveland, on December 23-24.

### Winter 1982-83

President Reagan mulls over his "Star Wars" defense system proposal. Toni Basil's "Mickey" tops the Billboard chart during December; to the everlasting embarrassment of all music fans of this period. Here's a victory for the "mild winters equal few finches" contingent—this winter is "one of the mildest..." and finches are essentially a no-show throughout. Gulls come on strong, including maxima of 11 glaucous, three Iceland, and 640 great black-backed gulls along Lake Erie. This is not to mention the new European immigrant lesser black-backed gulls, Ohio's second California gull, a black-headed gull, and a black-legged kittiwake. Other rarities? Why, of course: a prairie falcon at Rickenbacker Air Force Base in Columbus January 21; a grasshopper sparrow in Butler County February 5; and a purple gallinule recovered from a Mansfield residence February 21, only to succumb the next day, and to wander erratically no more.


### Winter 1992-93

Under the George H. Bush and Bill Clinton administrations, in December U.S. troops are sent to Somalia to aid in U.N. famine relief efforts. The World Trade Center in New York City is bombed February 26 with five killed. On February 28 a failed attempt is made to arrest David Koresh in Waco, Texas. Hmm, here is another "unusually mild" winter, and a corresponding "absence of many regular boreal passerines." Whether there is any significance, who's to say? Rarities do not disappoint, however, and include a Ross's goose at Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge in February, a dapper male Barrow's goldeneye at Avon Lake on February 28, and a black-throated gray warbler in Brown County through February 16.

### Winter 2002-03

See Bill Whan's seasonal report elsewhere in this issue. It presumably includes information on finches, gulls, and rarities. We can only hope.

### Winter 2012-13

On our return trip, our time machine accidentally skips past our destination and pauses briefly during the winter of 2012-13 before yanking us back to spring 2003. But in 2012-13, we can see three species of hummingbirds attempting to winter in Ohio. We see American crows, great horned owls, and all other permanent residents back at expected "pre-West Nile Virus" population levels. We see mind-numbing hybrid gull swarms infesting the lakefront. We see a group of die-hard birders attempting to slap a name on each and every one. And we see lots more birders just trying to ignore them altogether. If I squint hard enough, I think I can see myself in that latter group. It's funny, I seem happy enough... 

## Annals of Pelagic Birding in Ohio: Black-capped Petrel

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*If a company of ghosts were suddenly to 'materialize' before us, make strange gestures and depart silently, leaving only their chilly shrouds behind them for memories of their visit, we should know about as much of their whence and whither, their 'life histories,' in short, as we know now of these strange wanderers from the trackless deep.*

—W. L. Dawson on this species, in *The Birds of Ohio* (1903)

A century ago, the black-capped petrel *Pterodroma hasitata* was a bird of mystery, its very existence subject to debate. As recently as 1928, Alexander's work on pelagic birds called it "perhaps now extinct." Today we know it to be a Caribbean breeder, with a few thousand pairs nesting in mountainous areas of Hispaniola (Wingate 1964, Lee & Vina 1993). At least a few can be seen in deep ocean waters off our southeast coast throughout the year, their presence continuous because young birds remain at sea for four to six years after fledging (Imber 1985). It has been recorded at a number of inland spots in eastern North America, almost always accompanied by severe storms. The black-capped petrel has a place on Ohio's official list, and among neighboring states and provinces also on the lists for Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and Ontario.

### The Petrels of 1898

The inclusion of black-capped petrel in Ohio's avifauna is based on events during two windy October days 104 years ago in the Cincinnati area. In language far less figurative than Rev. Dawson's, one Josua Lindahl of Cincinnati wrote up this occurrence in a general note "The Black-capped Petrel (*Æstrelata hasitata*) on the Ohio River at Cincinnati" for *The Auk* for 1899 (Lindahl 1899a):

*A specimen of this oceanic bird was noticed yesterday (Oct. 5, 1898) on the river at the east end of Cincinnati by two young men who approached it on a boat, close enough to hit it with an oar. It was brought alive to the Museum of Natural History. Its skin will be preserved in the museum. It proved to be an adult female.*

*A young male of the same species was taken the same evening on one of the bridges connecting Cincinnati with the Kentucky shore. It was seen fluttering about the electric lamp, and finally struck the glass globe<sup>1</sup> and fell down on the bridge where it was picked up by the bridge watchman. The specimen was brought to the Zoological Gardens in Cincinnati where it lived one day and was then given to Mr. Charles Dury, in whose collection the skin will be preserved. Mr. Dury, who skinned both birds, tells me they were extremely emaciated and their digestive canals contained nothing but a little watery fluid.*

<sup>1</sup> Black-capped petrels are to a large extent nocturnal feeders (Imber 1985).

A few days after the capture of these two specimens at Cincinnati my attention was called to a notice in a Kentucky paper about an "arctic gull" captured by Captain W. L. Thomas of the ferry boat at Augusta, Ky. I at once wrote to Captain Thomas for more information. He very kindly sent me the skin of the bird together with the following notes: "The bird was discovered and caught near my boat, last Tuesday a week ago (Oct. 4) just at daybreak, exhausted; for a few days he showed fight and appeared to wander all after night...I kept him alive for ten days by forcing small minnows down his throat...The specimen I would call a Fulmar." Captain Thomas's identification proved correct. The bird is the Black-capped Petrel, and was the third specimen of its kind brought by the same gale to the Ohio River between Ohio and Kentucky. —Josua Lindahl, Cincinnati, O.

Kemsies and Randle (1953) recount the story in this way:

Lindahl in the *Auk* XVI, page 75, reports the capture alive of three individuals near Cincinnati on the Ohio River; one on the Kentucky side October 4, 1898, and two on the Ohio side the following day. Maslowski gives us the following information concerning these birds. "Only one of the three petrels is now in the C.S.N.H. Coll. One of the three was given alive to the Cincinnati Zoo where it died. Not realizing its value the specimen was thrown on the manure heap. Dury, learning of this, hurried to the Zoo, dug up the petrel and managed to save it as a skin for his private collection. Later Mr. H. K. Coale<sup>2</sup> of Chicago sent a blank check to Dury who sold the petrel skin for several hundred dollars. It is my understanding that this specimen is in the old Field Museum collection.<sup>3</sup> This then accounts for just two of the three birds. Despite my best efforts I've never been able to learn the fate of the third one." A recent check with the Weather Bureau reveals that for several days previous to the above mentioned dates a moderately high wind (25 miles per hour) had prevailed from the Southeast. This might well account for the accidental appearance of this species now close to extinction. There are, of course, no other Ohio records.

Earlier, Karl Maslowski himself had reported the circumstances in his nature column in *The Cincinnati Enquirer* (1938) thus:

Excluding the Cincinnati Warbler, the rarest bird ever to visit the Cincinnati area of which specimens<sup>4</sup> are still alive is the black-capped petrel. Following a severe tropical hurricane in 1928 three of these birds winged their way up the Ohio Valley. One dropped exhausted at Augusta, Ky., on October 4, while the two others were found tired and weary near the Cincinnati Suspension Bridge on October 5...

The fate of the Augusta specimen is unknown. One of the birds found at Cincinnati was sent to the Zoological Gardens, while the other, a female, was made into a skin for the Natural History Museum, where it reposes to this day.

<sup>2</sup> Henry K. Coale must have been a dedicated collector; his 1915 survey in the *Auk* of extant specimens of the trumpeter swan is often cited.

<sup>3</sup> The Field Museum's bird collections manager David Willard informed the author that neither the Museum nor the Chicago Academy of Science now possesses an Ohio or Kentucky specimen of *P. hasitata*.

<sup>4</sup> In personal communication with the author, Maslowski stated that in the present day "individuals" might be clearer than "specimens" in this sentence.

A few days after their discovery, the petrel at the Zoo died since it refused all food that attendants proffered this tropical straggler. Apparently unaware of the rarity of this bird the petrel was thrown on a refuse heap. The late Mr. Charles Dury went to the Zoo the day following the bird's death and made inquiries about its condition. When he learned it had succumbed and had been thrown away he made haste to unearth the bedraggled bird.

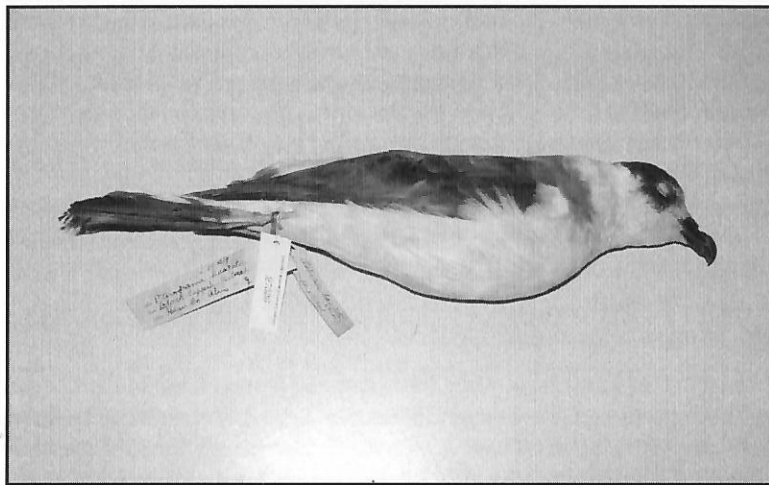
Taking it to his taxidermist shop in Avondale he cleaned and skinned the specimen. Word soon spread that Mr. Dury had a fine skin of the rare black-capped petrel in his possession. It was not long until he received a letter from a wealthy gentleman in the East seeking to purchase the skin to be donated to a large museum. Mr. Dury sold it promptly for \$250.

We shall never know how many black-capped petrels were in the Cincinnati area during those days, but it is remarkable that three live birds were retrieved. Ironically enough, this record would probably never have been published had the first instinct of humans not been either to kill the birds or to capture them as something of value—even of remarkable value, as \$250 at the time would have paid for a 500-year subscription to *The Wilson Bulletin*. It was a common practice of the day for museums to pay collectors for specimens of birds, and even to issue want-lists of species desired with prices offered.

Another question is whether, at least based on the testimony above, the black-capped petrel really belongs on the Ohio list. Near the localities mentioned, the entire Ohio River—except where normally dry land on the Ohio side might have been flooded—would have been within the state of Kentucky.<sup>5</sup> Lindahl's (1899a) contemporaneous testimony seems to describe two birds found on the Ohio River or over it and one on the bridge (though it is, one supposes in the absence of evidence to the contrary, possible it was found on the small portion of the bridge within Ohio's boundary), making them all Kentucky birds. This is how Mengel (1965), Monroe (1994), and Palmer-Ball (2003), authors treating the birds of Kentucky, regard them. If Kemsies and Randle had any firmer justification for their assertion that two birds were found on the Ohio side of the river, it has not been recorded, at least to our knowledge. The words they chose (see above) may indicate they mistakenly regarded the middle of the river, or perhaps even the Kentucky shore, as the border between Kentucky and Ohio.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Per *Ohio v. Kentucky* No. 2, Orig. 444 U.S. 335 Argued 3 Dec 1979, Decided 21 Jan 1980 in the U.S. Supreme Court, the border is "the low-water mark on the northerly side of the Ohio River as it existed in 1792 when Kentucky was admitted to the Union, not the current low-water mark on the northerly side of the river..." A. Froehlich informs us this line is currently under water. Flow in the Ohio was first controlled by the Federal government with the completion of a lock and dam in 1885, five miles below Pittsburgh, and it is likely no dam in the Cincinnati area enlarged the river 13 years later.

<sup>6</sup> This seems likely, at least in Lindahl's case, since his brief report for the Ohio Academy of Science (1899b) suggests he apparently regarded all three specimens as coming from Ohio: "Not less than three specimens of the rare Black-capped Petrel (*Ēstrelata hasitata*) were captured on the Ohio River last summer [*sic*], 1898, after a violent gale on the Atlantic coast. This is the first record of any specimen of this pelagic bird being found in the State of Ohio."



Specimen #CMC-B-27336 from the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History, the only known black-capped petrel skin surviving of the three involved in the visitation of 1898. The oldest tag gives the collection location as "Ohio Riv. Cinti" and the date as 5 Oct 1898. Photo by Ned Keller.

### The Petrels of 1996

There is reason to believe the exceptional set of occurrences that brought us these birds may not remain unique after all. Black-capped petrels have proved susceptible to being blown off course by intense and sustained onshore winds, especially in areas like North Carolina where the Gulf Stream flows relatively close to the mainland.<sup>7</sup> This species figured prominently, for example, in the long list of pelagic species seen well inland during the hurricanes of 1996, in weather conditions that could well prevail again, and during which only increased and organized birder attention made many new records possible. In the aftermath of Hurricane *Bertha* in 1996, for example, from 12-17 July 37 black-capped petrels were recorded from shore in Virginia, and eight in New Jersey. Later that year, as a result of the more intense Hurricane *Fran*, eight were recorded onshore in Virginia, one or two in North Carolina, three in Pennsylvania, four in New York, and one in Maryland (Brinkley et al. 1997); in addition, 23 specimens and sight reports of 17 birds came from on or near Lake Erie and Lake Ontario (Curry 1996b). Other pelagic birds blown our way by *Fran* included at least four Wilson's storm-petrels *Oceanites oceanicus* and several unidentified storm-petrels seen in Ontario near Niagara Falls (*ibid.*), and a black skimmer *Rhyncops niger* and a Cory's shearwater *Calonectris diomedea* in Pennsylvania (Brinkley et al. 1997).

<sup>7</sup> An exception is the latest of Florida's two inland records of the species, a bird found in Lake County in the central part of the state 28 February 2001 following a period in which no easterly winds had been recorded; it died 2 March 2001 (Scales 2002).

So what did Ohio observers see during the memorable Great Lakes invasion of storm-driven oceanic birds in the fall of 1996? Not much. Birders along Lake Erie may have been energized by news of the birding possibilities the unusual weather presented, but no extraordinary Ohio reports ensued.

The eye of *Fran*, by then technically a tropical depression, entered Lake Erie over Conneaut about 1400 h on Saturday 7 September 1996. Winds from the north-northwest at Cleveland averaged 32 mph and peaked at 43 mph that day, the year's rainiest in Ohio, with 4.59 inches of precipitation and a barometric reading of 28.80 inches. Continuing northerly winds and low pressure over the ensuing 10 days made the month of September 1996 set the all-time state monthly record for rainfall with 11.05 inches.

Across the lake in Canada, birders were alert and organized, and nearly a hundred mounted lake watches over lakes Erie and Ontario in and near the storm's track beginning that weekend (Curry 1996a). On Sunday 8 September the first black-capped petrel was sighted on Lake Erie near Port Colborne, and later that afternoon three were seen off Fort Erie, across from Buffalo, New York. Curry (1996b) describes a strong depression that generated intense easterly winds the following week, with a petrel sighting on 17 September as far west as Point Pelee, just 35 miles north of Huron, Ohio. Nearly all these records came from the eastern end of Lake Erie, but speaking of this day and that to follow, Curry wondered "whether systematic searching at the extreme western end of Lake Erie in Michigan and Ohio on these days might have turned up some petrels."

During September 1996, reports came from the Ontario side of Lake Erie of 12 black-capped petrels seen and 16 found dead or injured, not to mention the storm-petrels mentioned above, reports of five living and two dead sooty terns *Sterna fuscata*, and two American oystercatchers *Haemotopus palliatus* on 9 September near Port Colborne on Lake Erie (*ibid.*). It turned out to be a good fall for Ohio jaegers along Lake Erie, though many showed up after Hurricane *Fran* was only a memory. An observer reported seeing two oystercatchers off the Lake Erie shore in Ashtabula 14 September 1996, but the Records Committee did not accept the documentation, principally because such a first state record required more than a brief report of a single-observer sighting. All in all, one wonders if perhaps we missed a great opportunity to find some noteworthy new pelagic wanderers in Ohio, and by all accounts the black-capped petrel could have been among them, as it might be in years to come.

### Acknowledgments

Ned Keller provided valuable primary sources for this account, as well as excellent photographs of the Cincinnati specimen. Peter Burke and Bob Curry assisted with Canadian records. Karl Maslowski offered textual clarification and additional detail. August Froehlich helped with sources in determination of the Ohio/Kentucky border in 1898. Finally, we are grateful to Glenn Storrs, curator at the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History, for access to the specimen in his care.

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## Thomas Wetlands – Paulding County

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For those unfamiliar with the topography of Paulding County, its chief feature is doubtless its incredible flatness. What was once a heavily-forested swamp has been transformed into largely treeless, highly-drained farmland that provides little or no habitat for water birds apart from limited natural stream areas. Mudflats and shallow natural ponds simply do not exist today. It is from this void of habitat that has sprung the Thomas Wetlands, a veritable oasis welcoming migrant, water-loving species of birds among unrelenting fields of mud and spring wheat. Utilizing the Federal program known as Wetlands Reserve, several members of the Thomas family were able to obtain cost-sharing to build approximately 60 acres of wetlands and to receive payments over a number of years for their conservation efforts. The results have been dramatic.

The most remarkable aspect of this transformation is how quickly what was once marginally productive farmland has become such an attraction for wildlife. Since their completion in the summer of 2001, these four areas have brought new hope and joy to the shorebird-starved birders of this area. Where once killdeers and the occasional spotted sandpiper or yellowlegs might be seen in a shallow ditch or along the edge of a farm pond, now the spring migration brings the certainty of a dozen or more species of common shorebirds and the ever-present possibility of rarities, such as Wilson's and red-necked phalaropes, willets, or Hudsonian godwits, all of which were seen in 2002. The Wetlands' total species count of shorebirds stands at 21 at present, but this number will surely grow in years to come. In addition, these wetlands have served to attract good numbers of waterfowl, mostly in the spring. Among the 19 species of waterfowl, greater white-fronted and snow geese are the most worthy of mention, but the extended springtime presence of flocks of blue and green-winged teals, gadwalls, northern shovelers, and ruddy ducks shows the strong attraction the area has for these birds as well. In addition, the very existence of a marshy area in these flatlands has attracted numerous other species, among which are American coot, pied-billed grebe, sandhill crane, cliff swallow, and American pipit.

The Thomas Wetlands are located near the intersection of Township Road 61 and County Road 176, about two miles east of the village of Antwerp (DeLorme Atlas Page 34, C-2, where they are labeled as Harrman and Hopkins roads). There are several ponds along County Road 176 that have been great for shorebirds, but visibility is somewhat limited, and the heavy truck and automobile traffic make stopping along the road a hazard. Fortunately, a 5-acre pond located at the southwest corner of the intersection can be safely viewed from Road 61. About one-half mile farther south on Road 61, along the north side of South Creek, lies an 8-acre pond, which provides the best viewing of waterfowl. There is an area adjacent to

the creek where one might pull off the road for a better view of the pond, but permission should be obtained from the owner, who lives in the first house north of this pond.

These ponds and their adjacent habitat may not merit many visits from birders privileged to live near the Lake Erie marshes, but for those of us whose lands have largely lost their attraction to the marshland species, they offer new credibility to the saying, "If you build it, they will come."

*Information about the Wetlands Reserve Program can be had from The Natural Resources Conservation Service at the USDA or at <<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wrp/>>. -Ed. *



This gathering of divers was photographed at E. 72<sup>nd</sup> Street in Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, by Gary Meszaros on 9 February 2003.

## The 2002-03 Christmas Bird Counts

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Sixty Christmas Count circles reported their results this year, the same number as last year. There was only one change: Mt. Gilead was back after a year's absence, but we did not hear from Athens. All but three of the circles also reported their results to National Audubon, which was the source of most of the data presented here. Clark County, Gypsum, and Hancock County (which counts the entire county, not the standard 15-mile circle) are reported only here. Data from the rest of the country and beyond, and from past counts, are available online at Audubon's web site, <<http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/>>.

In the past, we have designated sightings reports that included documentation. Because we no longer receive reports directly from most count circles, and because the documentation submitted to Audubon is not available online (at least, I couldn't find it!), that feature has been dropped. The data are reproduced here as received, with two exceptions: I have corrected what seemed like obvious errors (such as multiple Oregon juncos, with zero other dark-eyed), and I have undoubtedly introduced new errors while transcribing the data.

We saw a total of 148 species this year, plus an additional 4 during count weeks. This is back to a more ordinary number than last year's 152 species. Eighteen species were recorded from only a single count on count day: a great egret at Ohio River, 11 trumpeter swans at Ottawa NWR, a common eider at Mentor, a harlequin duck at Grand Rapids-Waterville, 3 white-winged scoters in Lakewood, an osprey in Hancock County, a broad-winged hawk at Portsmouth, 3 Virginia rails at Millersburg, a common moorhen in Columbus, 2 purple sandpipers at Lake Erie Islands, an American woodcock at Beaver Valley, 2 little gulls in Mentor, a Thayer's gull in Cleveland, a northern saw-whet owl at Killdeer Plains (with another count-week individual at Dayton), a rufous hummingbird at Wooster (with another count-week bird in Cincinnati!), a Swainson's thrush at Lakewood, a common yellowthroat at Millersburg, and a white-winged crossbill at Wellington. Obviously, sightings such as these are the ones for which documentation is most desirable. Inevitably, common species were missed occasionally: where were the American kestrels in Lakewood, the American crows at Grand Lake St. Marys, and the American robins at Oxbow Lake?

Cincinnati led the pack with the highest number of species reported, with 87. Not far behind were Millersburg with 85, Lake Erie Islands with 84, and Cuyahoga Falls and Toledo with 82. Cuyahoga Falls had the best turnout of field observers with 92 (plus an additional 45 feeder watchers), followed by Preble County with 84 and Cincinnati with 81. Mansfield and Parkersburg also turned out impressive numbers of feeder watchers, with 24 and 23, respectively.















# Attention, Ohio Observers

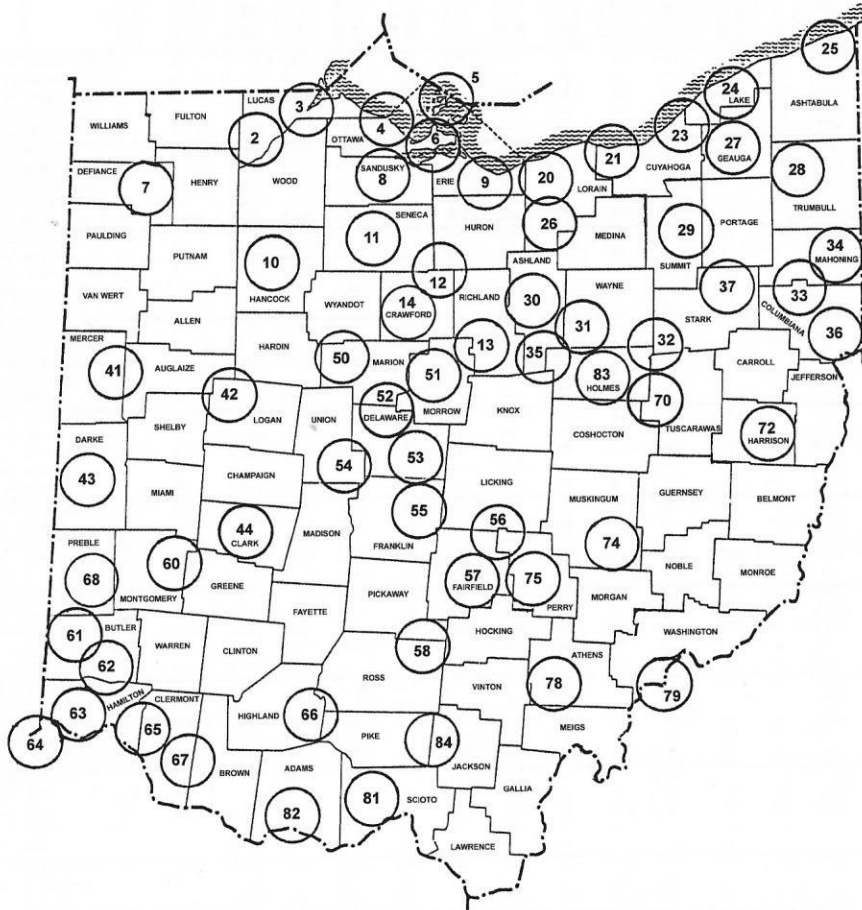
W. Leon Dawson


*A hundred winters ago, William Leon Dawson was completing work on The Birds of Ohio (1903). He issued the following appeal to Ohio birders in the January-February issue of the Wilson Bulletin (15[1]:32). Present-day readers may be interested in seeing a list of birds whose Ohio status was problematic a century ago, as considered by one of the most prominent ornithologists of the day. —Ed.*

Information is especially desired concerning the status or occurrence in this State of the following species. Some of them are merely under suspicion as probabilities; some are just coming to recognition as newly elaborated sub-species; others, once reckoned common by our ornithological fathers, have unaccountably passed from our ken; others still, while well known residents of our State, occupy variable areas, or occur within limits not satisfactorily determined. In preparing a book on the Birds of Ohio the writer is both discovering the weak places in his own armor, and waking up to the fact that many likely species are being allowed to pass unnoticed by the majority of observers. Any information received will be gratefully acknowledged in these columns or in the pages of the book:

- Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*).
- Red-legged Black Duck (*Anas obscura rubripes*).
- Cory's Least Bittern (*Ardetta neoxena*).
- Yellow Rail (*Porzana noveboracensis*).
- Black Rail (*P. jamaicensis*).
- American Goshawk (*Accipiter atricapillus*).
- Saw-whet Owl (*Nyctala acadica*).
- Olive-sided Flycatcher (*Contopus borealis*).
- Yellow-bellied Flycatcher (*Empidonax flaviventris*).
- Hoyt's Horned Lark (*Otocoris apestris [sic] hoyti* Bishop); recently elaborated.
  - Probably abundant in winter.
- Prairie Horned Lark (*O. a. praticola*) in winter.
- Thick-billed Redwing (*Agelaius phoeniceus fortis* Ridgw.) in early winter and early spring.
- Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*). What is its range?
- Philadelphia Vireo (*Vireo philadelphicus*).
- Northern Parula Warbler (*Compothlypis amicana usneæ*).
- Sycamore Warbler (*Seirus noveboracensis notabilis*).
- Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*).

W. LEON DAWSON, Columbus, O. 



The 2002-03 Christmas Bird Count areas. Numbers within circles correspond to count numbers in the preceding article. 

# Occasional Abundance of Certain Birds on or near Lake Erie

**E. L. Moseley**

*Edwin Lincoln Moseley (1865-1948), science teacher at Sandusky High School and later professor of biology at Bowling Green State University, was a beloved educator whose many publications include Sandusky Flora and Flora of the Oak Openings West of Toledo. These notes appeared in the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Report (1899:12-15) of the Ohio Academy of Science. —Ed.*

On the Saturday before last Thanksgiving citizens of Sandusky whose places of business overlook the Bay saw wild swans in such numbers as most of them had never seen before. From the shore near the western limit of the city more than a thousand could be seen at one time resting on the water. The night watchman at the Short Hine dock said they arrived during the night, though another observer saw fifty-six in one string the day before.

This fall was marked by the absence of cold rains and high winds. From the 14<sup>th</sup> of November the weather had been warmer every day than usual at that time of year,—on the 14<sup>th</sup> only three degrees warmer but from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup> on an average nine degrees warmer than the normal. This caused the swans to remain rather late in Canada. From Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup> to Nov. 25<sup>th</sup> the wind blew from the north and north-east and so they moved down to the most southerly feeding ground to be found before starting on their long journey to the south. One that was shot proved to be a whistling swan, *Olor columbianus*. Most of them remained but a single day, though some were around as late as Dec. 11.

Mr. August Fettel says that every March many swans on their way north pass to the east of Sandusky, and that in the spring of 1887 when he was working on the pavillion at Cedar Point, he saw “one continuous string of swans flying only thirty or forty feet above the water for two hours. There must have been thousands of them.”

Mr. Dilyne, keeper of the club-house at the West Huron marsh, says he has not seen so many swans before in the fall for ten years but that there were more last spring and he usually sees more in spring than in the fall. Mr. Ritter keeper of the range-light at the entrance to Sandusky Bay, also saw more last spring.

Canada geese appeared in great numbers this fall the same day as the swans. There may have been two thousand of them and as many swans on Sandusky Bay, Nov. 25<sup>th</sup>. Many of the geese were still there Dec. 18; and some may remain all winter, as they did two years ago.

Before sunrise, April 11<sup>th</sup> 1896, occurred a thunder-shower at Sandusky with a warm wind from the south-east. I had seen no yellow-bellied sapsuckers earlier in the season, but that morning they were numerous. Seventy-five, it is said, were seen in a single yard at one time and there must have been thousands in the city. In the country, where I spent most of the day, I saw no sapsuckers. My earliest record for

these birds in 1894, is April 7<sup>th</sup>; in 1898, April 7<sup>th</sup>; in 1895, April 8<sup>th</sup>; in 1891 and 1899, April 10<sup>th</sup>. In 1896 they came with the warm wind of April 11<sup>th</sup>, and stopped in Sandusky for liquid refreshments before attempting to cross the lake. These sapsuckers apparently take no solid food while they are with us.

April 1<sup>st</sup> 1892, Captain Haas was detained on Rattlesnake Island by a dense fog. Wherever he walked he could take but a few steps without starting up a wood cock. About a week later he was on the island again but could not find any of them. The same fog that made it unsafe for him to leave the island had detained the birds also.

The preceding cases are clearly traceable to the influence of the weather. Others depend rather upon local abundance of food.

October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1895, John R. Schacht, whose father is engaged in the fish business in Erie, Pa., wrote me as follows:—“To-day a boat came in with some hundred pin tail ducks [the species referred to is long-tailed duck *Clangula hyemalis* —Ed.] which were caught in the gill nets and drowned. The nets are only five feet deep and rest on the bottom in nineteen fathoms of water. It seems the ducks dive down after the fish and thus get caught in the nets and drowned.


“The fishermen claim that they have caught as high as two hundred ducks in their nets which were in only fourteen fathoms of water. About this week and next is the time when such great numbers get caught and drowned.

“Thought I could mention the above as it seemed very remarkable that these birds dove to such great depths.

“The ducks ere all of this one species—pintail.”

In his next letter he wrote:—“Since writing you about the pintails being caught in the deep water fish net, I have inquired and found out that in the fall of 1893 one tug in one day brought in between 1000 and 1500 ducks. Also have found that they have caught them in thirty fathoms of water.”

In my paper on “The White-headed Eagle in Northern Ohio,” I mentioned the fact that about seventy-five eagles had been seen at one time feeding on the fish which had been caught under the ice in seines and rejected by the fishermen.

Eave swallows, after the young are fledged, may sometimes be seen resting in great numbers on the wires along country roads in the vicinity of the lake marshes. In July 1894 I saw about six hundred together on the wires a few miles west of Sandusky and in 1896 about twelve hundred a few miles east of the city. Mr. Marion W. Bacome recently told me of seeing one time between Bellevue and Fremont a much greater number of “common” swallows than this. There were “at least three birds to the foot for a distance of nearly four hundred feet” and he thinks nine wires, making not less than ten thousand swallows. 

# Recent Actions of the Ohio Bird Records Committee

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Due to various circumstances, no decisions on records have been reached since the previous issue of *The Ohio Cardinal*. However, the following records are currently in review, and decisions, final or interim, on these will be reported in the next issue.

## New Circulations

- Northern Gannet** *Morus bassanus*—Lorain County, 10 January 2003.
- Ross's Goose** *Chen rossii*—Montgomery County, 11-12 January 2003.
- Ross's Goose** *C. rossii*—Preble County, 7 March 2003.
- Ross's Goose** *C. rossii*—Portage County, 18-20 March 2003.
- Yellow Rail** *Coturnicops noveboracensis*—Tuscarawas County, 7 October 2002.
- Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus*—Lake County, 19 January 2003.
- Mew Gull** *Larus canus*—Lake County, 14 November 2002.
- California Gull** *Larus californicus*—Lake County, 3 November 2002.
- California Gull** *L. californicus*—Lorain County, 14 January 2003.
- Western Gull** *Larus occidentalis*—Cuyahoga County, 1 March 2003 and Lorain County, 10 March 2003.
- Least Tern** *Sterna antillarum*—Ashtabula County, 19 August 2002.
- Rufous Hummingbird** *Selasphorus rufus*—Adams County, 13 December 2002.
- Rufous Hummingbird** *S. rufus*—Carroll County, 5 December 2002.
- Townsend's Solitaire** *Myadestes townsendi*—Cuyahoga County, 3 March 2003.

## Records in Recirculation

- Bicknell's Thrush** *Catharus bicknelli*—Ottawa County, 28 October 2001.
- Piping Plover** *Charadrius melodus*—Wyandot County, 26 August 2002.
- Rufous Hummingbird** *Selasphorus rufus*—Clermont County, early November–28 December 2002.
- Rufous Hummingbird** *S. rufus*—Wayne County, late October 2002–4 January 2003.

## Other Information

In recent elections, the following persons were named to the OBRC: Rob Harlan, Joe Hammond, and Sue Tackett. They replace Larry Rosche, Bernard Master, and Dave Dister to whom are due warm thanks for their service. Due to the untimely and very unfortunate passing of Cal Keppler, a temporary member will be appointed to fulfill the remainder of his term, which expires in 2004. 🦅



Up to five adult red-shouldered hawks were observed on a regular basis this season in Burton, Geauga County. Gary Meszaros was able to photograph this one there on 27 January 2003.