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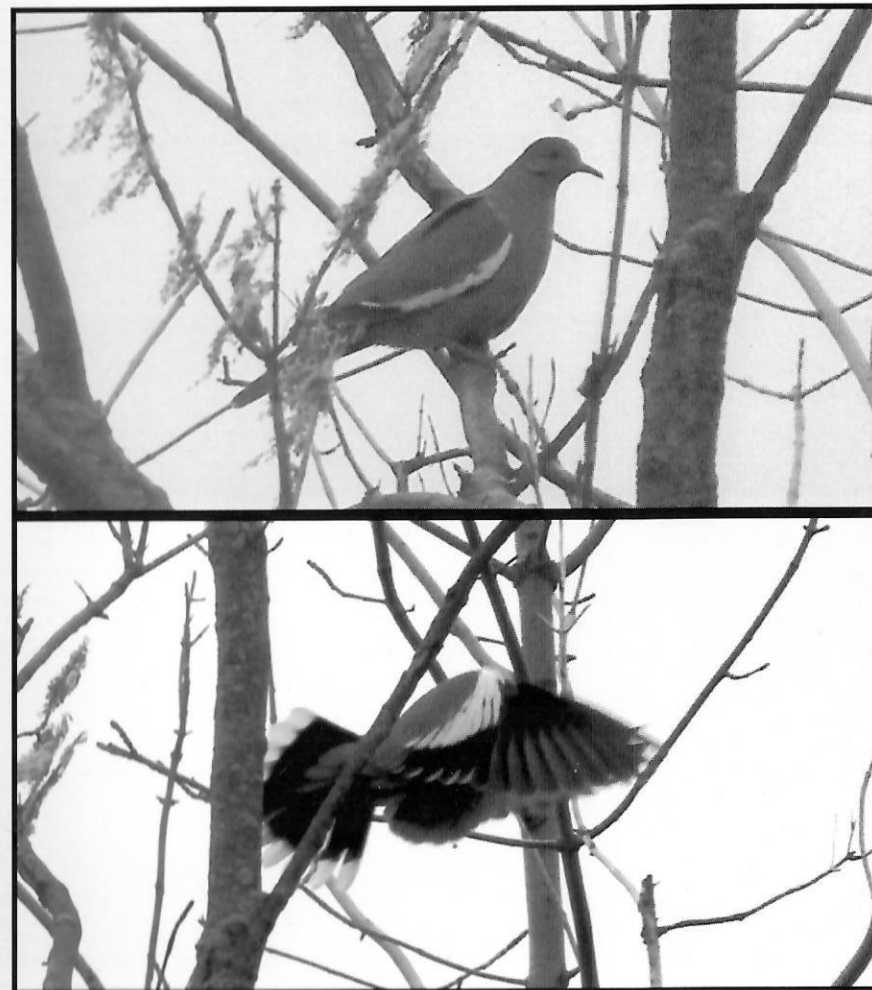
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*The Ohio Cardinal* is a quarterly publication devoted to the study and appreciation of Ohio's birdlife.

*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.

<b>Seasonal Report Due Dates</b> Winter (Dec.-Feb.)-March 25 Spring (Mar.-May)-June 25 Summer (June-July)-August 25 Autumn (Aug.-Nov.)-December 25	<b>Please send all reports to:</b> Bill Whan 223 E. Tulane Road Columbus, OH 43202 <a href="mailto:billwhan@columbus.rr.com">billwhan@columbus.rr.com</a>
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**On the Cover:** Pictured at rest and taking flight-- never to be refound-- was Ohio's fourth record of white-winged dove *Zenaida asiatica*, sighted 28 Apr by J. Habig in Delaware County. Photos by Troy Shively.



## Winter 2006-2007 Overview and Reports

by Bill Whan  
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This spring's abnormal weather dramatically affected many birds. March extended the overall warm trend of winter, with temperatures 5.3 degrees F above the average, and was quite wet, with 3.78 inches (~57%) more than normal precipitation in mid-state. May too averaged quite warm, 3.5 degrees above normal, but with only ~58% of normal rainfall.

April was another story. Its very cold spell most noticeably influenced birds. Most of the month averaged 6.4 degrees above normal, but between the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> came days of frost and temperatures averaging 13 degrees below normal overall. Such conditions would not have been so eventful in March, but on this schedule it coincided with flowering and/or fruiting of many plant foods for migrants, as well as accompanying emergences of insects, and impeded in some ways the spring migration. Before its arrival, many plants were already two weeks ahead of schedule. With Lake Erie open, the predictable occurred in the snow belt, with 30+ inches on the ground in Solon the 9<sup>th</sup>; Toledo had 13.4 inches during April. Even in the southernmost counties die-off of leaves at treetops cast a pall over the spring landscape. Some birds arriving early to take advantage of March warmth paid the ultimate price. Many effects may linger, with reduced food sources persisting into the coming year.

Migration slowed after a first wave of early movers, especially with the April cold snap. Early migrants like waterfowl had largely left the state by the time and were unaffected. Impacts on Carolina wrens, bobwhites, northern mockingbirds, etc. by snow cover at such a time were expected. Reduced catches at insect traps were reported. Veteran observer Bob Royse reported on 10 April that no new birds seemed to have arrived in the Shawnee SF since 2 April; Rob Thorn reported few changes in birdlife in Columbus between the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup>. After the ensuing thaw, migration was a week or more behind schedule. Some early breeders, such as phoebes, apparently abandoned nests during the April freeze, then resumed. A big push on the third week of the month was noticeable, but migration still lagged slightly behind at April's end.

Birds of passage adapted by delaying slightly their local movements, or relying on food sources different from the usual. Widely noticed, unprecedented numbers of rose-breasted grosbeaks visited feeders in mid-April. Some migrant shorebirds, who are headed for the high Arctic and shrug off cold spells, had good local numbers this spring. Prairie-loving species like golden-plovers and pectoral sandpipers were seen in decent numbers, but numbers of local breeders like killdeers seemed less than robust at the same time.

Lake Erie water levels were the highest since '95-'96, exacerbating the erosion of natural features (our Canadian neighbors now talk of a "pointless Pelee"). The much shallower Western Basin especially is increasingly defined by artificial shorelines; an offshore boat trip provides extensive views of riprap and dikes, especially—ironically enough—in the wildlife areas. Such shorelines are not inviting to wading birds and other forms of imperiled wildlife such as marsh-spawning fishes or native mussels. The effect is cumulative, as armored shorelines increase erosion on unarmored ones. This spring, a drawdown at Metzger Marsh supplied some habitat features that characterized a more natural shoreline there, and attracted good numbers of birds for only the second spring since the completion of the Pharaonic dike system there twelve years ago.

This spring 15 rare review species were reported, fewer than last year, but interesting overall: Ross's goose, cackling goose (3), tricolored heron (2), glossy ibis

(multiple), white-faced ibis (multiple), Swainson's hawk (3), piping plover (3), black-necked stilt (3), Eurasian collared-dove, white-winged dove, scissor-tailed flycatcher, loggerhead shrike (2), Kirtland's warbler, spotted towhee, and Harris's sparrow (2). As always, we report them here provisionally and without attribution, and observers are reminded that acceptable documentation is required to enter occurrences of rare birds to the official Ohio records; please send details to the Ohio Bird Records Committee; the address for Secretary Tom Kemp is inside the front cover.

In this issue, beyond our regular features, there appear accounts of Ohio passenger pigeon populations from over a century ago, as well as an inspiring article about creating shorebird habitats in the state. We hope readers will profit from reading them, and that they'll be moved to offer contributions of their own to Ohio's ornithological record in the *Ohio Cardinal*.

**Corrigenda:** In the Reports for the spring 2006 season, the 200 ruddy ducks at Lake Milton occurred on 7 April. In last issue's Reports, delete Butler from listed counties with northern shrikes; the 10 Feb Virginia rail was seen at SVWA; the harlequin duck photo pictured an immature male; and add a lesser black-backed gull in Mansfield 27 Dec (*vide* S. McKee), a third-winter bird and two adults at CFR 14-20 Jan, and an adult at Chas Mill Lk 12 Jan (all J. Herman); the 24 Jan pipits were in Fairfield Co.

The Reports follow the nomenclature and taxonomic order of the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the *AOU Check-list of North American Birds* (1998), including the 47<sup>th</sup> Supplement (July 2006), except for the capitalization of English names of birds, where we follow standard English usage. 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 attributions (i.e., reporters' names) in the Reports. Where supplied, county names appear *italicized*. Unless numbers are specified, sightings refer to single birds. Abbreviations, conventions, locations, and symbols used in the Reports should be readily understood, with the possible exceptions of the following: ad=adult; alt=alternate (breeding) plumage; BCSP=Buck Ck SP in *Clark*; BIWA=Big Isl WA in *Marion*; BSBO=Black Swamp Bird Observatory; CCE=Crane Ck estuary in ONWR; CPNWR=Cedar Point NWR in *Lucas*; CVNP=Cuyahoga Valley Natl Pk 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 2006; Deer Creek=Deer Creek WA in *Pickaway/Fayette*; EHSP=East Hbr SP in *Ottawa*; fide="in trust of," said of data conveyed on behalf of another person; Funk WA is in *Wayne*; Gilmore Ponds is in *Butler*; GLSM=Grand Lk St Marys in *Mercer/Auglaize*, HBSP=Headlands Beach SP in *Lake*; HBSNP=Headlands Beach SNP in *Lake*; HWSP=Hueston Wds SP (*Butler/Preble*); imm=immature; Indian Creek WA is in *Brown*; Killbuck=Killbuck Marsh WA in *Wayne/Holmes*; Killdeer & KPWA=Killdeer Plains WA in *Wyandot*; LSR=Lakeshore Reservation (MP) in *Lake*; Magee=Magee Marsh WA in *Ottawa/Lucas*; MBSP=Maumee Bay SP in *Lucas*; MCWS=Mill Creek Wildlife Sanctuary in *Mahoning*; Medusa=Medusa Marsh in *Erie*; Metzger=Metzger Marsh WA in *Lucas*; MP=Metropark; m obs=many observers; MWW=Miami-Whitewater Wetlands in *Hamilton*; NWR=National Wildlife Refuge; OBBA=Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas, second edition; OBRC=Ohio Bird Records Committee; ODOV=Ohio Division of Wildlife; ONWR=Ottawa NWR in *Ottawa/Lucas*; ONWRC=monthly bird census at ONWR, reported by E. Pierce; PCWA=Pickerel Ck WA in *Sandusky*; ph=photograph, PP=power plant, Res=Reservoir; Res'n=Reservation; SCBC=Greater Akron Audubon Society Summit County Bird Count of 16-25 June; Shawnee=Shawnee SF/SP in *Scioto*; SF=State Forest; SNP=State Nature Preserve; SP=State Park; SVWA=Spring Valley WA in *Greene/Warren*; VOA=Voice of America Park in *Butler*, WA=Wildlife Area.

## The Reports

**Greater white-fronted goose:** An immature bird found near **Lucas (Richland)** 5-7 Mar (J. Herman) was relocated at **Charles Mill Lk** on the 9<sup>th</sup> (G. Cowell). Not much of a showing after last spring's 240 birds.

**Snow goose:** Single-digit March reports came from **Trumbull, Franklin, Wayne,** and **Clark**, with a nice flock of ~300 near **Toledo** the 19<sup>th</sup> (M. Zuillhof). Four stragglers spent 19-21 Apr at **Acton Lk** (D. Russell et al.).

**Ross's goose:** One reported from **Clinton** 3 Mar was determined by the OBRC to show several intermediate features with snow goose—a premonition of a sticky ID problem likely to increase. One was widely observed in **Holmes** 30 Mar - 27 Apr.

**Cackling goose:** Reported were one in **Pickaway** 3 Mar, one at **SVWA** 8 Mar, and two at the **GLSM** fish hatchery 18 Mar. The OBRC still requests documentation for this newly-designated species.

**Mute swan:** A potential pest increasingly worth monitoring, especially in the northern counties. J. Dolan reported 33 in **Columbiana** 12 Mar, C. Bombaci 13 in **Hoover Res** 20 Mar, V. Fazio eight at **EHSP** 2 Apr, and at **Metzger R&S Harlan** had 22 on 21 Apr, 32 on 6 May, and five on 22 May; the latter observers also reported 38 in the **Marblehead** area 21 May.

**Tundra swan:** Unprecedented numbers at many spots this winter. Not long ago, these swans passed through a rather narrow sliver of NE Ohio on their spring return. This year, reports of multiple birds came from **Ashland, Pickaway, Clinton, Auglaize, Wayne, Wyandot,** and **Hardin**, as well. The migration took place in March, with the latest reported 24 at **Funk** the 26<sup>th</sup> (S. Snyder). The high count of 1300+, no doubt augmented by a large wintering contingent, came from **ONWR** on 12 Mar (A. Sewell).

**Wood duck:** Early concentrations peaked at ~300 at **Indian Ck WA** 4 Mar (B. Stanley). 179 on 26 May at **CPNWR** (E. Tramer) were probably males dodging parental duties.



A snow goose touched down at Acton Lk 19 April. Photo by Dave Russell.



Bruce Glick got a photo of a rarity for Holmes County—a Ross's goose—on 9 April.

**Gadwall:** Spring concentrations in w. Lk Erie marshes were considerable, with 725 at CPNWR (E. Tramer) and 850+ at Metzger (V. Fazio) on 1 Apr, where K. Kaufman reported 1320 the following day. Ten remained at the latter location 13 May (R&S Harlan).

**Eurasian wigeon:** A few Eurasians are a spring standby. A drake frequented Funk from 21 (Levi Yoder *vide* S. Snyder) through 28 Mar (E. Schlabach). J. Pogacnik found another at ONWR 8 Apr, and R. Troutman one at Killbuck 22 Apr.

**American wigeon:** Large numbers reported included 500+ at Deer Creek 6 Mar (B. Royle) and ~700 at Killdeer on the 20<sup>th</sup> (R. Lowry). Five lingered at ONWR as late as 12 May (R&S Harlan).

**American black duck:** Lacking aerial survey numbers as usual, highs were 263 at Blendon Wds MP in Franklin 4 Mar, with two remaining 4 Apr (B. Simpson), 150+ at Deer Creek 6 Mar (B. Royle), and 190 at BIWA 1 Apr (V. Fazio). One remained on a CVNP pond 11 May (D. Chasar).

**Mallard:** As always the most numerous of our waterfowl, ~4000 were at Deer Creek 6 Mar (B. Royle); S. Snyder tallied ~700 at Funk 25 Mar.

**Blue-winged teal:** This tenderest of local breeders appeared 10 Mar in Portsmouth (B. Sparks), with 35 gathered at Indian Ck WA by 18 Mar (B. Stanley). In Hardin, 86 were present 6 Apr, then 412 by the 14<sup>th</sup> (R. Counts). R&S Harlan observed 75 at Metzger 21 Apr. C. Holt came across birds in Ashtabula 31 May.

**Northern shoveler:** The high count was a healthy 355 off CPNWR 1 Apr (E. Tramer), and inland counts of ~100 at Deer Creek 6 Mar (B. Royle) and 89 in Hardin 24 Mar (R. Counts) were good, where one remained 28 May. Castalia hosted 71 on 8 Mar for V. Fazio.

**Northern pintail:** Among the first ducks to move, with most gone by the second week of Mar, ~500 were at Deer Ck 11 Mar (E. Reiner), 268 in Hardin 24 Mar (R. Counts), 130 at BIWA 1 Apr, and 29 lingered in Hardin 14 Apr (Counts).

**Green-winged teal:** Arrived in Paulding 15 Mar (M&D Dunakin), with triple-figure reports of 189 in Hardin 24 Mar (R. Counts), 540 at BIWA 1 Apr (V. Fazio), 375 in Hardin 14 Apr (Counts), and ~100 at Metzger 21 Apr (R&S Harlan). Nesting seemed likely in Ashtabula, with birds as late as 31 May (C. Holt).

**Canvasback:** With larger movements behind them, cans peaked at ~275 between MBSP and Metzger on 19 Mar (M. Anderson), with a hundred inland at Funk on 18 Mar (R&S Harlan) and 85 there on the 28<sup>th</sup> (E. Schlabach). A singleton lingered at Winton Wds in Cincinnati on 22 Apr (Jay Stenger).

**Redhead:** The largest numbers involved ~150 at Deer Ck 6 Mar (B. Royle), 750+ off Bay View on Sandusky Bay 8 Mar (V. Fazio), 200+ on Caesar Ck Lk 13 Mar (L. Gara), ~4000 at Metzger/MBSP 19 Mar (M. Anderson), and 480 at BIWA on 1 Apr and 210 at EHSP on 3 Apr (both Fazio).

**Ring-necked duck:** Mostly a Mar migrant, with ~1200 on the 6<sup>th</sup> at Deer Ck (B. Royle), 1350 at Funk the 18<sup>th</sup> (R&S Harlan), ~800 at Mogadore Res the 24<sup>th</sup> (G. Bennett), numbers tailed off rapidly thereafter, with single birds reported 10 May at KPWA (Sempier) 10 May, two at Ottawa NWR the 13<sup>th</sup> (R&S Harlan), and one at Pipe Creek WA the 19<sup>th</sup> (G. Links).

**Greater scaup:** Inland, B. Foppe reported 40 at EFSP 7 Mar, and V. Fazio 14 at Castalia the following day. Fazio related that perhaps 5% of ~9800 scaups off EHSP were greater on 2 Apr. One persevered on Akron's Summit Lk as late as 2 May (G. Bennett).

**Lesser scaup:** G. Links observed ~5500 off MBSP on 3 Mar, but this species' migration is more protracted than that of others. V. Fazio counted 715 inland at BIWA on 1 Apr, then estimated a flock of ~9800 scaups to contain ~95% lessers at EHSP on the next day. At Metzger, ~2500 remained on 21 Apr for R&S Harlan. Two females dallied as late as 24 May in Hardin (R. Counts).

**Surf scoter:** Too numerous to detail, reports came of 105 birds in Ashland, Clark, Clermont, Clark, Clinton, Cuyahoga, Delaware, Franklin, Hamilton, Hardin, Highland, Lake, Lorain, Marion, Morrow, Noble, Richland, and Wood. High counts included 13 in Rocky River, Cuyahoga on 3 Apr (P. Lozano), 12 at Clear Fk Res 27 Apr (J. Herman), and 10 at Hoover Res on 21 Mar (R. Thorn).

**White-winged scoter:** Nearly all inland, with reports from 15 Mar at Seneca Lk (J. Benedetti), 6-17 Mar at Pleasant Hill Lk (J. Herman), 24 Mar at Seneca Lk (R. Schlabach), 25 Mar at KPWA (D. Overacker), 25 Mar and 8 Apr at Bresler Res in Lima (D. Dister, also 4/18), 27 Mar at Metzger (R. Nirschl), 30 Mar two at Clear Fork Res (Herman), 30-31 Mar at Pleasant Hill Res (Herman), 31 Mar at LSR (J. Pogacnik), 22 Apr in Huron (T. Kemp), 12 May two off CPNWR (E. Tramer), and one at Mosquito Lk 15 May (C. Babyak).

**Black scoter:** The rarest scoter in spring, a female was at the Senecaville fish hatchery 24 Mar (E. Schlabach).

**Long-tailed duck:** A drake was at Killbuck 17 (E. Schlabach) through 21 Mar (S. Snyder). E. Kistler found one at Mosquito Lk 18 Mar, and one discovered by D. Kersten 24 Mar in Medina was around 3 Apr for K. Neugebauer. One at Springfield Lake in Akron (G. Bennett) was found 19-21 Apr. The Dunakins had another in Paulding 6 May.

**Bufflehead:** A nice inland number of 250+ was at Mosquito Lk 25 Mar (A. Morrison). The Kelleys Island stronghold produced 272 on 26 Mar and 555 on 21 Apr (T. Bartlett). Extraordinary was an apparent exodus from the state 21 Apr, when G. Bennett found 101 at Long Lake, 44 at Nesmith Lk, 23 at North Res, 209 at Nimisila Res, 105 at Springfield Lk, 51 at Summit Lk, and 108 at Turkeyfoot Lk (all in Summit), and 82 at Wingfoot Lk and 193 at Mogadore Res (in Portage), for a total of over 900. The same day P. Lozano found 52 off Rocky River Pk and 95 down the road at Bradstreet Ldg. Few were reported thereafter, with a dawdler at Mosquito 15 May (C. Babyak).

**Common goldeneye:** No huge numbers, with high counts of ~450 at MBSP on 3 Mar (G. Links) and 905 off Kelleys Isl on 26 Mar (T. Bartlett). Tarrying in Hardin were one 21 Apr and two pairs on 19 May (R. Counts).

**Hooded merganser:** A modest high count as usual, 100+ with waterfowl hordes at Deer Ck SP 6 Mar (B. Royle). Females with young were reported between 6 and 21 May from Sandusky, Ashtabula, Lucas, Ottawa, and Wayne. Drake hybrids with common goldeneye were found at Medusa Marsh (12 Mar, A. Sewell) and the Lorain harbor (17 Mar, J. Pogacnik).

**Common merganser:** Good numbers from winter continued, with 650 at MBSP 3 Mar (G. Links); that same day J. Pogacnik counted 43 at LSR, then 1285 the following day. Twenty at Seneca Lk 24 Mar were the last migrants reported (E. Schlabach). Three at Beaver Creek SP 5 May were probably local breeders (J. Dolan).

**Red-breasted merganser:** A thousand were off **Rocky River** 12 Mar (P. Lozano), after which numbers at reservoirs increased: J. Benedetti had ~500 at **Seneca Lk** 15 Mar, C. Bombaci 273 at **Hoover Res** 20 Mar, V. Fazio 560 at a **Findlay** reservoir 30 Mar, and E. Kistler 100+ at **Mosquito Lk** the following day. Six hundred were still at **Conneaut** 14 Apr (C. Holt), and late were singletons there on 16 May (Holt) and at **Shreve Lk** in *Wayne* 18 May (R&S Harlan).

**Ruddy duck:** Continued at favored spots, such as ~500 at **Wellington Res** in *Lorain* 11 Apr (C. Caldwell), with a spike on 21 April, when G. Bennett found ~300 at **Mogadore Res** in *Portage*, and in **Summit** 250+ at **Nimisila Res** and 390+ at **Springfield Lk**. As always, several lingered, at **KPWA** 10 May (R. Sempier), and R. Counts noted a pair on 25 May and a single bird in *Hardin* 28 May.

**Northern bobwhite:** C. Dusthimer noted several at **Tri-Valley WA** 14 May, D. Patick 12 at **Crown City WA** 20 May, and J. Grabmeier heard birds 29 May in *Williams*, where there is apparently no active release program.

**Red-throated loon:** J. Pogacnik spotted one at **LSR** 1 Apr, and J. Herman an adult bird in basic plumage at **Clear Fork Res** in *Richland* 15 Apr.

**Common loon:** The high count was 135 on 31 Mar at **Clear Fork Res** (J. Herman). Fifty-five were at **Seneca Lk** on 24 Mar (E. Schlabach). A few hung around into May, such as flybys at **Magee** on the 12<sup>th</sup> (R&S Harlan) and in *Ashtabula* the 20<sup>th</sup> (C. Holt); one was at **Delaware Res** 25 May (B. Shively).

**Horned grebe:** A few had shown up throughout the winter, and modest numbers passed through beginning early in the period; the largest flight involved 115+ 21 Apr in *Summit* reservoirs (G. Bennett). Few seen thereafter.

**Red-necked grebe:** Scarce as usual, with three sightings: 7 Apr one off the **HBSP** breakwall (R. Hannikman), an alternate-plumaged bird at **Mosquito Lk** 22 Apr (J. Lucas *vide* C. Babyak), and another at **LSR** (J. Pogacnik) 28 Apr.

**Eared grebe:** Continued a recent trend by showing up in numbers: early on 10 Mar (J. McMahon, **Rocky Fork Lk**), at **Medusa** 13 Mar (S. Young), 18 Mar at **KPWA** (C. Followay et al.), at **Mentor** 14-17 Apr (*vide* L. Rosche), at **Conneaut** 14 Apr (C. Holt), at **Fairport Hbr** 15 Apr (J. Pogacnik), at a **Findlay** res 19 Apr (B. Hardesty), and a bird in alternate plumage in *Huron* 22 Apr (T. Kemp).

**American white pelican:** Few, and tended to be sedentary. C. Tucker found one at **BCSP** 21 Mar, which remained 22 Apr (R. Asamoto). Another at **Delaware WA** 30 Mar (Jack Stenger) persisted till 13 Apr (B. Master).

**Double-crested cormorant:** Moved on a schedule with waterfowl. First migrant was at **Cowan Lk** 10 Mar (L. Gara). By 31 Mar, ~200 were found at **Hoover Res** (C. Bombaci), and the following day J. Pogacnik witnessed passage of 848 at **LSR**. Some immature birds loafed at reservoirs, such as 71 remaining 8 May at **Hoover** (Bombaci).

**American bittern:** First of spring was one in *Lucas* on 19 Mar (M. Anderson). Reports came from fifteen other counties thereafter. As usual, most were on their way to Canada, but Atlas activities should reveal more about how many breed in Ohio. P. Rodewald heard three at **ONWR** as late as 16 May, for example.

**Least bittern:** A disappointingly small number of reports as usual, many of obvious northbound migrants.

**Great egret:** Healthy numbers, and first reported 13 Mar at **Funk WA** (C. Followay). On 1 April, S. Young estimated 46 possible nests at **Turning Pt Isl** in *Sandusky*. For perspective on this colony, Peterjohn (2001) estimated 20-30 pairs, and the *Cardinal* reported two pairs in 1995, "at least 40 nests" in 2000, "100 birds" in 2001, and "about 50 nests" in 2005. By 14 Apr, C. Caldwell found 150 at **Medusa Marsh**, numbers more reminiscent of fall gatherings there. At **Metzger**, P. Rodewald counted 241 on 10 May. On 1 May, M. Brehmer detected egrets building a nest at the same abandoned quarry in **Columbus** where they nested for the first time last spring, with a second nest underway on 18 May. One in **Conneaut** 14 Apr was out of the way (C. Holt), and May reports of non-breeders emerged at many spots. Thirty birds were at **Sandy Ridge Res'n** in *Lorain* on 30 May (C. Caldwell).

**Snowy egret:** One appeared in *Ross* 29 Apr (J. Ross *vide* D. Hess). The usual small numbers were found in the NW marshes, with maxima three at **Metzger Marsh** and two at **Magee Marsh** on 3 May (P. Rodewald). One in *Clermont* on 17 May (B. Stanley) was noteworthy.

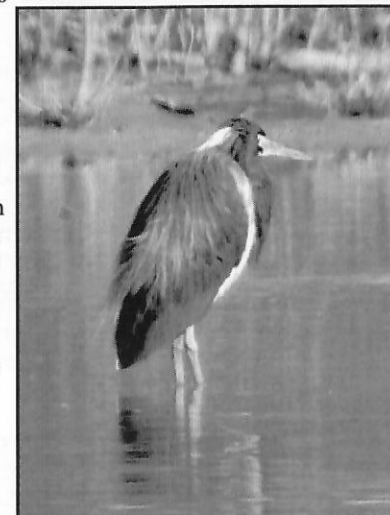
**Little blue heron:** Their presence in the NW marshes was as expected, with an ad and an imm at **Magee** by 22 Apr (B. Bowman). Staged a mini-invasion in the SW this spring. One was at **SVWA 2** (C. Schooley) through 10 Apr (J. Habig), and it or another there 22 Apr (L. Gara). Others were reported from **Caesar Ck SP** (14 Apr, F. Frick), **MWW** (25 Apr, J. Nicodemus), **Indian Ck WA** in *Brown* (30 Apr, B. Foppe and 8 May, Jay Stenger), and **HWSP** (23 May, A. Hickey).

**Tricolored heron:** Two were discovered, one at **HWSP** 21 Apr, and another 24 May at **Pipe Ck WA**. Documentation is requested.

**Cattle egret:** Few were reported. Near **ONWR**, L. Harder had one 26 Apr, and G. Leidy one 28 Apr. Migrants are usually reported to the south in April, but not this year; two were reported in May, one on the 4<sup>th</sup> in *Hancock* (B. Hardesty) and another on the 12<sup>th</sup> at **Killbuck WA** (E. Schlabach).

**Green heron:** Arrived as expected in mid-Apr, first in *Clermont* the 14<sup>th</sup> (K. Robinson), with five seen along a stretch of the **Scioto River** in **Columbus** by 1 May (B. Roysse).

**Black-crowned night-heron:** P. Lozano's last report of the wintering birds in **Cleveland** had 76 birds there on 10 Mar. The smaller roost on the OSU campus in **Columbus** had 10 on 20 Mar (B. Fate). C. Holt reported two at **Conneaut** on 14 Apr. Twelve were found in **Winton Wds** in *Cincinnati* 10 Apr (J. Lippert); at **Spring Grove Cemetery**, a pair was present at the nesting island 1 May (Jay Stenger), then 10 on 9 May (D. Brinkman).



A tricolored heron was found for a few days at Acton Lk in Hueston Woods SP. Photo 21 Apr by Dave Russell.

**Yellow-crowned night-heron:** For the eleventh consecutive spring, showed up to nest on a quiet sycamore-lined street in **Columbus**. First noticed on 2 Apr, when two adults and an immature were reported by A. Paschall. Two nests were renovated and used, and ten young hatched by the eop. Elsewhere, J. Pogacnik had one roosting in his lakeside yard 8 May. L. Loibl sent an intriguing report of one in **Beaver Ck SP in Columbiana** on 25 May for the only other sighting.

**Glossy ibis:** Consistent with recent range expansions by ibises, numerous reports from Ohio and SE Michigan suggest a mixed flock containing as many as 7-10 of this species moving in the western Lake Erie marshes. Most Ohio reports in the area came from **Metzger Marsh**, beginning 26 Apr (six or more glossies) through the eop (m obs). Other sightings came from **Killbuck WA**, with three 10-12 May, a bird at **Prairie Oaks MP** near Columbus 15 May, one at **SVWA** 18 through 20 May; one was reported at **Sandy Ridge in Lorain** 15 May, two more at **Pipe Ck WA** on 19 May, and one at **Metzger** 29 May.

**White-faced ibis:** Closely related to movements of the previous species were smaller numbers of this one. One or more was reported in a flock of ten ibises, at least six of them glossies, on 26 Apr at **Metzger Marsh**. One was with six glossies there on 12 May. The last report came 29 May with one glossy. Elsewhere, one briefly accompanied the three glossy ibises at **Killbuck** on 10 May. The OBRC requests documentation for all ibis sightings.

**Black vulture:** Noteworthy records included 26 over **Holmes** 25 Mar (E. Schlabach), one at **LSR** way up in **Lake** 1 Apr (J. Pogacnik), one in **Coshocton** 11 Apr (L. Deininger), another in **Holmes** 13 May (J. Miller), and two in **Columbus** 27 May (T. Shively).

**Turkey vulture:** Gatherings of 100+ were not uncommon in the southern counties the first week of the season. Large migrant numbers showed up later, with ~900 over **Toledo** on 21 Mar (E. Tramer), and ~450 there four days later (R. Nirschl). Elsewhere along Lake Erie, on 25 Mar J. Pogacnik counted 622 at **LSR**, then farther west N. Anderson et al. had 528 at **Mentor**, and P. Lozano 138 still farther west in **Cleveland**.

**Osprey:** The Ohio nesters, most descended from released birds, seem to arrive ahead of migrants. Among those reported, at least one member of pairs arrived at **The Wilds** 16 Mar (A. Parker), **Jefferson** 20 Mar (S. Albaugh), **Franklin** 24 Mar (B. Simpson), **Seneca Lk** 24 Mar (R. Schlabach), **Salt Fork** 26 Mar (J. Larson), **Hoover Res** 29 Mar (C. Bombaci), **EFSP** 30 Mar (G. Fantetti), **Tappan Lake** 4 Apr (two pairs, D. Smith), **Nimisila Res** 8 Apr (R&S Harlan), **Caesar Ck SP** 9 Apr (L. Gara). Later, good numbers of migrants included 22 on 23 Apr and 31 on 27 Apr over **Conneaut** (R. Schlabach), and 20 over **Holmes** on 26 Apr (D. Kline *vide* B. Glick).

**Northern harrier:** Ten remained at **Mosquito Lk WA** 25 Mar (A. Morrison). Migrants observed over **Conneaut** numbered 29 on 23 Apr and 56 on 27 Apr (R. Schlabach). On 12 May, S. Snyder observed one at **ONWR**, and R&S Harlan a female in **Ottawa**. On 20 May, the Harlans had a harrier at **ONWR**, and D. Patick a male at **Crown City WA in Lawrence/Gallia**. C. Holt suspected breeding at **MCWS, GRWA, Mosquito Lk WA, and Denmark Twp in Ashtabula**.

**Sharp-shinned hawk:** Migrants over **Cleveland** 26 Mar numbered 21 (R&S Harlan). Over **Conneaut** on 23 Apr were 580, and on 27 Apr 182 (R. Schlabach).

**Northern goshawk:** J. Pogacnik had an adult 25 Mar in **LSR**, and R&S Harlan an adult and an imm over Perkins Beach in **Lakewood** 26 Mar. R. Schlabach reported an imm 29 Mar in **Tuscarawas**, and M&D Dunakin another in **Antwerp, Paulding** 10 Apr.

**Red-shouldered hawk:** K. Overman reported four early migrants east of **Toledo** 4 Mar, and E. Schlabach 13 over **Holmes** on the 13<sup>th</sup>. No larger number was reported than 35 over **Toledo** on 25 Mar (R. Nirschl).

**Broad-winged hawk:** Early was one in **Holmes** 1 Apr (E. Schlabach); the next report came from **Hamilton** on the 10<sup>th</sup> (D. Brinkman). E. Schlabach and other observers counted 2246 over **Conneaut** on 23 Apr. On 26 April, D. Kline (*vide* B. Glick) observed 329 passing over **Holmes**. By 7 May, D. Chasar had found four nests at **Brecksville Res'n in Cuyahoga**.

**Swainson's hawk:** Remarkably, two were seen 23 Apr at **Conneaut** by m obs, an adult dark morph in the morning and a juvenile light morph in the afternoon. Documentation is with the OBRC. An adult was reported at **Magee** 3 May as well.

**Red-tailed hawk:** Seventeen migrants passed over a viewpoint in **Holmes** on 13 Mar (E. Schlabach). V. Fazio photographed a pale-morph "Kriker's" form on 30 Mar at **KPWA**, where this variant has something of a history. S. Kimball (*vide* J. Kuenzli) reported a dark-morph "western" form east of **Columbus** in late Mar.

**Golden eagle:** Wintering birds at **The Wilds** continued with one 3 Mar (G. Crippen), and one 7 Mar (A. Parker). Migrants probably from elsewhere appeared at **Bay View (Erie)** 21 Mar (M. Krejci), **NE Mahoning** 12 Apr (2<sup>nd</sup> yr, C. Holt), west of **Chillicothe** 15 Apr (imm, D. Hess), 16 Apr near **Upper Sandusky** (2<sup>nd</sup> yr, J. Kuenzli), and **Funk WA** on 21 Apr (imm, R. Troutman).

**Merlin:** The latest sighting of a wintering bird in **Garfield Hts** came on 30 Mar (L. Gardella). Thirty-three sightings were reported from April, predominantly from along the Lake, with only one from May, on the 10<sup>th</sup> flying west along the shoreline at **ONWR** (P. Rodewald).



In a scene now familiar in urban settings, this Cooper's hawk protects a kill on a lawn at Ohio State University. Photo by Kevin Fitzsimmons 19 April.



Dave Lewis relates that this rare pure albino red-tailed hawk was injured by a train and found at W. 130th St in Cleveland recently. This photo was taken at the Medina Raptor Center this spring.

**Peregrine falcon:** On 17 Mar, D. Chasar observed one attacking and killing a ring-billed gull at **Lorain** harbor. One was observed carrying food at **Conneaut** 14 Apr (C. Holt).

**King rail:** Skimpily reported. Two were detected at **Springville Marsh** in **Seneca** 5 May (B. Warner et al.), and singles at **Magee** 16 May (A. Boone) and **Mallard Club Marsh** 19 May (G. Links).

**Virginia rail:** First reported at **Springville Marsh** 25 Mar (T. Bartlett), then widely over the following two months. High counts were of five, at **SVWA** 22 Apr (R. Lowry), and at the **CVNP** sanitation pond 21 May (D. Chasar).

**Sora:** Few reports, the first of them on 22 Mar at **Magee** (R. Nirschl). The high count was ten, at **ONWR** on 12 May (R&S Harlan), and the latest came from a **Tuscarawas** hayfield on 23 May (R. Schlabach).

**Common moorhen:** Few reported, with none from some customary haunts. First noted 21 Apr at **HWSP** (D. Russell), and a high count of six at **ONWR** 12 May (R&S Harlan).

**American coot:** Flocks grew near the end of Mar into four figures, when V. Fazio counted 1080 at **KPWA** the 30<sup>th</sup>, then ~1300 at **BIWA** and 1850 at **Metzger** the following day. At the latter location, coots still numbered ~2000 on 30 Apr (E. Tramer). Nearly all continued their journey, but P. Rodewald was to count 512 at **Metzger** as late as 3 May, and 50 were at **ONWR** the 12<sup>th</sup>. C. Holt had a possible nest, unexpected at **Conneaut** in May.



Possibly thin-shelled, a broken egg at Cleveland's Terminal Tower peregrine nest site, found 21 Mar, was the only casualty. The first sound egg pipped 25 Mar. Photo by Scott Wright.

**Sandhill crane:** Nearly 500 reported statewide, about 300 in the SW counties, the last 25 migrants in **Clermont** latish on 26 Apr (N. Keller). Beyond the half-dozen **Wayne** breeders, and the birds seen yearly in **Geauga** and **Lorain**, NE migrants were seen at **Mosquito Lk** (E. Kistler, 31 Mar), **Summit** 10 May (D. Chasar) **Mentor** (eight on 25 Mar, N. Anderson), and Mar to 28 May in **Richland** (J. Herman). The high count was 65 at **MWW** 4 Mar (D. Conover). For the third year, a pair returned to **SVWA**, quickly becoming inconspicuous; though courtship has been observed, no obvious sign of successful nesting—such as colts—there has ever been announced.

**Black-bellied plover:** First detected as a duo in **Wayne** 24 Apr (S. Snyder). J. Hull found one at the **VOA** on 7 May, and C. Holt 15 at **Conneaut** on 16 May, but most reports came from the NW marshes, with a high count of 64 on 28 May at **Metzger Marsh** (K. Kaufman).

**American golden-plover:** Appeared in good numbers in favored spots. On 30 Mar, R. Counts found 700+ in n. **Wyandot**. Two days later V. Fazio counted 1030 in the **Big Island** vicinity. Two days still later T. Shively encountered 400+ in **Auglaize**. P. Gardner discovered ~200 at **Killdeer** 14 Apr, and on the 27<sup>th</sup>, both Shively and R. Sempier found 1000+ on fields near **BIWA**. Numbers at **Metzger** topped out at 120 on 8 May (R. Nirschl). Last reported were four in **Hardin** 24 May (Counts).

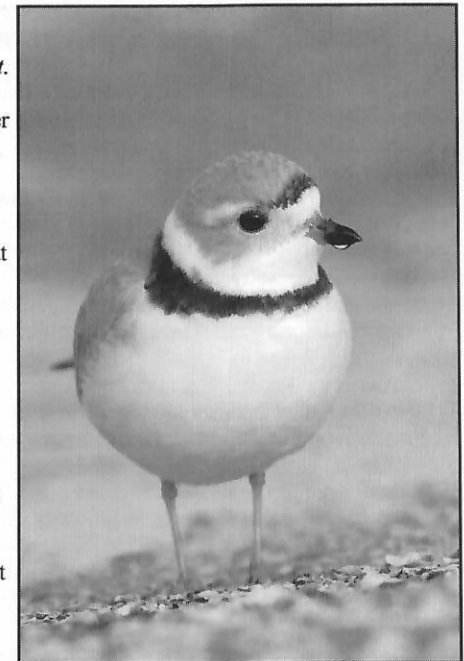
**Semipalmated plover:** All records came from May, with 59 found as late as the 29<sup>th</sup> in **Hardin** (R. Counts) and four at **Conneaut** the last day of the month (C. Holt). **Funk** hosted a good flock of 125+ on the 12<sup>th</sup> (E. Schlabach), but most sightings came from the western half of the state, where the potential of a place like **Metzger** for shorebirds was borne out by a new second-highest state record of 435 semipalmated plovers there 10 May (P. Rodewald).

**Piping plover:** **Metzger's** miniature beach attracted an unbanded individual 28 Apr. **HBSP** continued to set records, with two birds seen there 1 May and one on May 2; one was banded, *fide* A. Jones as a hatchling in Michigan's Sleeping Bear Dunes in either 2005 or 2006.

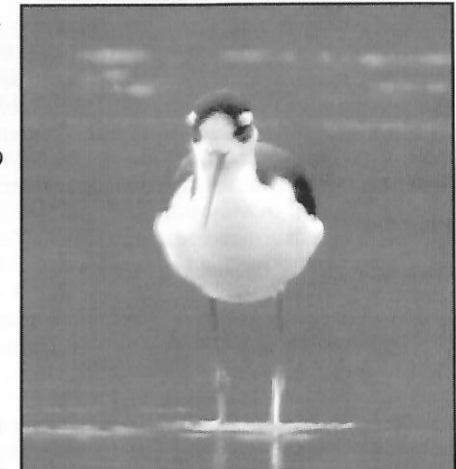
**Killdeer:** Off to a decent start, with 40-50 in a **Perry** field as early as 2 Mar (J. Faulkner), and ~100 at a **Cincinnati** park 9 Mar (B. Hull), numbers were not so good thereafter.

**Black-necked stilt:** One waded the shallows of **Acton Lk** 18-21 Apr (ph, m obs). A male and female raised hopes of nesting at **MWW** 25 May, but nothing came of them.

**American avocet:** P. Chaon reported four at **Metzger** 28 Apr, and S. Jackson 46 at **Walborn Res** on 2 May, a new state record number for an inland location.



This piping plover entertained many while combing the Metzger Marsh beach on 28 April. Photo by Brian Zwiebel.



Among HWSP's many rarities this season, this black-necked stilt was among the stars. Photo courtesy of Dave Russell.

**Spotted sandpiper:** One in *Hardin* 1 Apr (R. Counts) was early. Correspondingly late was an impressive flight of ~50 adorning **HBS**P's beach and breakwalls 20 May (R. Hannikman).

**Solitary sandpiper:** Also early was one near **Killbuck** on 7 Apr (S. Snyder). Numbers peaked at four at the **Delaware** water plant 3 May (B. Shively) and five in *Wayne* 17 May (Snyder).

**Greater yellowlegs:** One touched down 10 Mar along the Ohio River in **Portsmouth** (B. Sparks). The largest gathering was only 23, at **BIWA** 1 Apr (V. Fazio).

**Willet:** Continued the improved numbers of recent years, with 84 reported. D. Friedman found a local record 26 at **Magee** on 26 Apr. High numbers away from the NW marshes included 10 at **Columbia Res'n** in *Lorain* 2 May (R&S Harlan *vide* J. Brumfield), nine on **Alum Ck Res** beach 5 May (Jack Stenger), and 15 at **MWW** on 16 May (F. Frick).

**Lesser yellowlegs:** Arrived early, on 9 Mar, at **Acton Lk** (C. Tucker). Throngs numbered 179 in the Ohio River bottoms at **Portsmouth** 28 Apr (B. Whan), and ~200 at **Metzger** two days later (E. Tramer). One remained in *Hardin* 24 May (R. Counts).

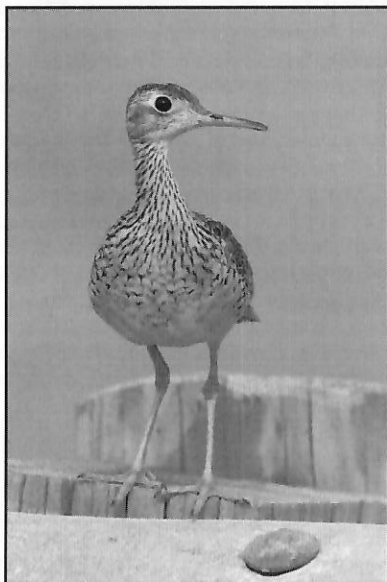
**Upland sandpiper:** Failed to please many, or perhaps any, observers at showplace spots like **Krause Rd** (though one was briefly at nearby **Howard Rd**. 23 Apr (B. Zwiebel), but was faithful to any number of airport strongholds, even adding one at Don Scott Field in **Columbus** (26 May, P. Rodewald). Increased security at these places makes assessment difficult.

**Whimbrel:** Disappointingly few appearances: one 23 May at **MWW** (P. Wharton), and three at **Metzger** 26 May (J. McCormac), on which day M. Anderson witnessed 22 skim over his daughter's soccer team near **Toledo**.

**Ruddy turnstone:** All spring reports in May as usual, with the first rather late on the 11<sup>th</sup> at **BCSP** (R. Asamoto). Good turnouts included 32 mostly alt birds at **Findlay Res #1** 27 May (R. Counts), and hordes at **Metzger** that topped out at 70+ on the 28<sup>th</sup>, with 25 remaining on the last day of spring there (both K. Kaufman).

**Red knot:** Not always seen in spring in Ohio recently, the partial liberation of **Metzger Marsh** benefited some, including 15 on 16 May (J. Miller) and five (four alt) on 28 May (K. Kaufman).

**Sanderling:** With the exception of a breeding-plumaged bird at **Caesar Ck** on 17 May (L. Gara), and one in mixed plumage on riprap at **Metzger Res** in *Lima* 31 May (D. Dister), all (five) other reports came from the Lake shore at **Conneaut** or **Metzger** in the second half of May.



Brian Zwiebel got this great image of an upland sandpiper along Howard Rd in Lucas Co 23 Apr. Never sighted again, it was probably just passing through.

**Semipalmated sandpiper:** Puzzlingly, appeared late (first reported 16 May at two *Ashtabula* spots by C. Holt), and sparingly, with a high count of only 34, in *Hardin* 28 May (R. Counts). It is possible they occurred in normal schedules and numbers at **Metzger**, but the viewing distances involved did not often permit confident identifications.

**Western sandpiper:** Seldom reported in spring here, a quite late first-year bird was carefully studied at **Orwell Marsh** in *Ashtabula* on 31 May (C. Holt).

**Least sandpiper:** Early was one found near **BIWA** 6 Apr (B. Kinkead). A bird in basic plumage was near **ONWR** on 21 Apr (R&S Harlan), but few reports emerged from the NW marshes, again perhaps because of the challenges to peep ID there. The high count was only 75, at **Funk** on 12 May (E. Schlabach), and reports emerged from *Hardin*, *Warren*, *Clinton*, *Franklin*, and *Ashtabula* during May.

**White-rumped sandpiper:** Early arrivals were birds near (6 May) and at (9 May) **Metzger** (R&S Harlan). Scarce, never reported in numbers higher than two, and hardly restricted to the NW marshes, it occurred through the eop.

**Pectoral sandpiper:** Its local fortunes often linked with those of golden-plovers, staged some good flights. First detected in *Pike* on 13 Mar (B. Royse), numbers peaked at the end of the month, with 450+ in *Hardin* the 30<sup>th</sup> (R. Counts) and 390 near **BIWA** two days later (V. Fazio), then during Apr 585 in *Hardin* (Counts) the 14<sup>th</sup> and ~400 near **ONWR** the 21<sup>st</sup> (R&S Harlan). Two in **Greene** on 22 May (D. Dister) and two at **Cowan Lk** the following day (L. Gara) were losing the race for good nesting spots.

**Dunlin:** R. Schieltz found a molting adult in *Darke* 15 Apr, and R&S Harlan one in basic plumage near **ONWR** on 21 Apr. By 22 Apr 100+ were at **Metzger** (B. Bowman), where on 8 May R. Nirschl estimated 2000 dunlins, on 9 May Tramer 4000, and on 10 May P. Rodewald 3050.

**Stilt sandpiper:** Quite unusual were seven credible reports in May. In *Wayne*, E. Schlabach had one the 12<sup>th</sup>, and S. Snyder another the 17<sup>th</sup>. At **Metzger**, S. Snyder found three the 11<sup>th</sup>, G. Miller one the 13<sup>th</sup>, G. Links one the 19<sup>th</sup>, and K. Kaufman another on the 31<sup>st</sup>. L. Gara had one at **Cowan Lk** in *Clinton* the 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Short-billed dowitcher:** Not many, with fewer than 225 reported statewide. Reported mostly on 16 May, including the rather puny state high count of 60 birds at **Metzger** (E. Schlabach). First arrivals were on 10 May, with 40 at **Funk** (J. Herman), and on 11 May with two in *Hardin* (R. Counts) and 14 at **MWW** (F. Frick), the last six in *Ashtabula* 20 May (C. Holt). Ours (*L. g. hendersoni*) is the rarest and most imperiled subspecies.

**Long-billed dowitcher:** Two dowitchers near **BIWA** 6 Apr were almost certainly of this species (B. Kinkead et al.). A dowitcher sp. reported at **BIWA** on 22 Apr (R. Asamoto) was another candidate.

**Wilson's snipe:** A few wintered. Burgeoning spring numbers included 30 in *Cuyahoga* 15 Mar (P. Lozano), ~50 at **Gilmore Ponds** 18 Mar (E. Baumgardner), 50+ in *Scioto* 17 Apr (B. Royse), and ~50 at the **VOA** site in *Butler* 24 May (M. Busam).

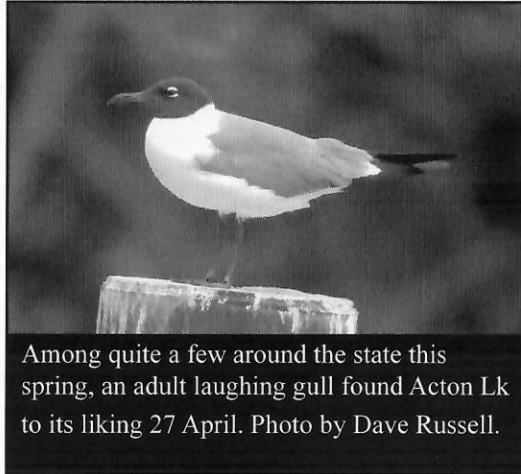
**American woodcock:** A few apparently wintered. Erie St. Cemetery in **Cleveland** was a good spot again, with 15 on 10 Mar (P. Lozano). J. Kuenzli found 23 in *Union* on 30 Mar. A woodcock was flushed from a nest with egg on 15 Mar in *Scioto* (P. Whan).



**Wilson's phalarope:** A poor flight overall, with one migrant on 12 May at **ONWR** (B. Warner), but an adult female showed up in **Hardin** 18 May, later to be joined by a male 25 May (R. Counts), with hopes for another nesting pair there this year. The happy couple was joined by another female 28 May (Counts).

**Red-necked phalarope:** The **Hardin** wetland attracted one 16 May (A. Boone), which remained through the 19<sup>th</sup> (R. Counts).

**Laughing gull:** In 2001, Peterjohn wrote that laughing gulls had been "rare spring visitors along Lake Erie," but "accidental spring visitors to inland lakes." This year ten inland lakes hosted 12 adult birds, with only three (at **Metzger** 12, 26, and 29 May) along Lake Erie: 27 Apr at **Acton Lk** (D. Russell), 29 Apr one at **Hoover Res** (K. Davis) then two 5 May (B. Sparks), one at **BSCP** 4 May (D. Overacker), two at **Caesar Ck SP** 9 May (L. Gara) and one 24 May (A. Oliver), one at the **GLSM** fish hatchery in **Auglaize** 9 May (M. Misplon), one at **Springfield Lk** in **Akron** 21 May (G. Bennett), one at **Alum Ck Res** 26 May (Davis), one at **Findlay Res #1** on 27 May (R. Counts),



Among quite a few around the state this spring, an adult laughing gull found Acton Lk to its liking 27 April. Photo by Dave Russell.

**Franklin's gull:** Not often a spring bird in Ohio, the only sighting was of one in **Cincinnati** 19 Apr (B. Hull).

**Little gull:** An immature bird passed **LSR** on 31 Mar (J. Pogacnik).

**Bonaparte's gull:** The earliest report of returnees was of two at **Seneca Lk** on 15 Mar (J. Benedetti). J. Pogacnik reported 920 at **LSR** 31 Mar, and by 7 Apr R. Hannikman was to report "thousands" at **Fairport Hbr**. Anomalous events included 63 at **Mosquito Lk**, a lot for 15 May (C. Babyak), and birds still in basic plumage at **Hoover Res** on 6 May (G. Stauffer) and at **Lorain** on 27 May (G. Bennett).

**Ring-billed gull:** At **LSR**, J. Pogacnik reported a partial count of 31,860 on 4 Mar. On 7 Mar, ~2000 staged down in **EFSP** (B. Foppe).

**Iceland gull:** Procrastinators were at **LSR** 3 Mar (J. Pogacnik), **Cleveland** 18 Mar (G. Leidy), and at **LSR** 25 Mar and 6 Apr (Pogacnik). C. Holt reported a first-year bird at **Conneaut** on 16 May, a new record late date for the species, which would be erased should Iceland be lumped with Thayer's gull.

**Lesser black-backed gull:** J. Pogacnik's morning surveys at **LSR** produced a first-year bird 4 Mar, and adults 25 and 31 Mar and 6 Apr (with a 2<sup>nd</sup>-yr). He found five at **Lorain** 17 Mar, where G. Bennett had one as late as 12 May. On 9 Apr, G. Cudworth reported five (two ad, three first) at **Eastlake**, along with 2 ad at **E 72<sup>nd</sup> St.**, and two more at **HBSP**. Two first-year birds were late at **Conneaut** 16 May (C. Holt). Inland, B. Hardesty found one at a **Findlay Res** 20 Mar, and J. Herman an ad at **Clear Fork Res** 19-20 Mar, then later another there 6 Apr, and on 16 Apr a second-summer bird.

**Glaucous gull:** **LSR** produced an adult 4 Mar, two first-years 6 Apr, and another 5 May (J. Pogacnik). R. Hannikman found two at **HBSP** 7 Mar, E. Reiner one at **E. 72<sup>nd</sup> St** 11 Mar, Pogacnik three at **Lorain** 17 Mar, and D. Good one at **Huntington Beach** 17 Apr. Another was inland at **Dillon Lk** in **Muskingum** 18 Mar (S. Skinner).

**Great black-backed gull:** J. Pogacnik witnessed 989 at **LSR** 4 Mar. Late in the period, at **Conneaut C.** Holt reported 25 on 5 May, 15 on 16 May, then one at **Fairport** 17 May.

**Great black-backed X herring gull hybrids:** J. Pogacnik reported an ad and a 2<sup>nd</sup>-year at **Lorain** 17 Mar.

**Caspian tern:** G. Stauffer encountered one early at **Hoover Res** 28 Mar. High count 60 at **Conneaut** 5 May (C. Holt).

**Black tern:** Seventy reported statewide, the only large flock 35 in **Hancock** 10 May, also the early date (B. Hardesty). Reported numbers at **Metzger** did not exceed five (J. Miller, 16 May), but may have included local breeders.

**Common tern:** Sparingly reported, first with two in **Delaware** 13 Apr (B. Master), and a high count inland of 17 at **Mosquito Lk** 15 May (C. Babyak).

**Forster's tern:** First reported were two 1 Apr from the Sandusky Bay Bridge (V. Fazio), and two had been seen just across the Lake at **Point Pelee** the previous day (A. Wormington). Remarkable were Forster's inland and far to the east, many of them, in mid-May: E. Schlabach reported 25 from both **Pleasant Hill Lk** and **Funk** on 12 May, C. Holt 25 from **Conneaut** 16 May, and C. Babyak the high count of 32 at **Mosquito Lk** 18 May. Later, L. Gara noted two at **Caesar Ck SP** 24 May.

**Eurasian collared-dove:** A Michigan observer documented a pair in the village of **Stryker** in **Williams** 12 Mar (ph).

**White-winged dove:** Observers documented one in **Delaware** 28 Apr, which if accepted would be the state's fourth.

**Yellow-billed cuckoo:** First reported 24 Apr in **Clermont** (B. Foppe), then 26 Apr in **Butler** (B. Schlake), then 6 May in **Zaleski SF** (D. Weber) and **Meigs** (T. Morman), cuckoos made good showings later in the month, with 30+ at **Magee** the 23<sup>rd</sup> (E. Tramer), 11 at **Deer Ck SP** the 27<sup>th</sup> (B. Royse), and 15 at **Hoover Res** on the 29<sup>th</sup> (C. Bombaci).

**Black-billed cuckoo:** Reported first from **Cincinnati's Shawnee Lookout** on 29 Apr (N. Keller), at **Magee** by 8 May six could be found (R. Nirschl), then five on 23 May (E. Tramer). A good flight, though as always the scarcer cuckoo.

**Barn owl:** Many succumbed to the April freeze; one **Holmes Co.** farmer kept his silo's pair alive with nightly feedings of poultry scraps. R. Thorn reported one in **Columbus** 23 May, where they are unexpected.

**Long-eared owl:** B. Shively found one in **Delaware SP** 1 Mar, and B. McNulty another in a **Columbus** park 4 Mar. A. Sewell reported the high count at **Killdeer**, five on 5 Mar. On 3 Apr, G. Leidy found a migrant at **HBSP**, and J. Pogacnik another elsewhere in **Lake**.

**Short-eared owl:** Not a good year by all accounts, with a high count of only 4-5 at **Killdeer** 13 Mar (B. Warner). Others were reported Mar and early Apr in **Trumbull** (J. Petruzzi), **Ottawa** (J. Pogacnik), **MBSP** (L. Stiefel), and **Hardin** (R. Counts)—which might have provided the high count had great horned owls not pursued them mercilessly. Interesting were two seen aloft during the **Conneaut** hawk-watch of 27 Apr (R. Schlabach).

**Northern saw-whet owl:** One was found dead along a road in **Fairport (Lake)** 14 Apr (J. Pogacnik).

**Common nighthawk:** The first returnee came on 28 Apr in **Marion** (R. Counts). Inconspicuous as always in spring, few migrants were reported. Continued gradually to disappear from former nesting sites, judging by reports. C. Holt, a quite active observer in NE Ohio, found exactly none this season.

**Chuck-will's-widow:** Appeared on schedule in its customary haunts, but one in **Butler** 3 May was a good find (D. Russell). Was once again repeatedly heard singing in **Hocking** this May (P. Knoop). Night surveys for the OBBA may teach us a lot about the distribution of this species in Ohio.

**Whip-poor-will:** B. Hardesty reported a bird heard 21 Mar-3 Apr in **Hancock**, an unusual record. Calling birds 1 Apr in **Scioto** (Z. Allen) and 2 Apr in **Meigs** (T. Morman) were more likely on territory.

**Chimney swift:** First reported in **Cincinnati** on a chilly 7 Apr (B. Wulker), others wisely awaited the end of the cold snap, with two in **Yellow Springs** 17 Apr (N. Boutis), and one in **Cuyahoga** by 19 Apr (G. Leidy). The phenomenon of large spring roosts was again noted, with S. Cunliffe reporting 100+ in a **Hudson** school chimney on 1 May, and R&S Harlan ~2000 entering a **Medina** chimney 7 May at dusk. See pp 178-179 of last summer's *Ohio Cardinal*.

**Ruby-throated hummingbird:** Secondhand reports, lacking much detail, of hummers at feeders 27 Mar in **Cuyahoga** and 1 Apr in **Lorain** were so early that the possibility of returning rufous hummingbirds must be considered, along with the possibility of misidentifications. L. Gruber had an early ruby-throated in **Clermont** more on schedule 22 Apr. Two at **Conneaut Hbr** 20 May (C. Holt) seemed out of place.

**Yellow-bellied sapsucker:** One in **Mahoning** 12 Mar was likely earlier than a spring migrant (C. Holt). Migrant numbers in single **Columbus** locations reached eight on 4 Apr (R. Thorn) and 12 on 22 Apr (B. Master). Birds in **Cincinnati** 5 (B. Stanley) and **Hancock** 8 May (B. Hardesty) were running late, but one for the 12 May CVNP census could have been a nester.

**Olive-sided flycatcher:** The first reports came from 4 May, at **Cedar Bog** (D. Snapp) and **BCSP** (D. Overacker). Last reported 31 May in **Paulding** (M&D Dunakin).

**Eastern wood-pewee:** On schedule, the first birds appeared 5 May, in **Columbus** (B. Royse), **Caesar Ck gorge** (N. Keller), and **Cincinnati** (B. Foppe); three days later they were in **Paulding** (Dunakins) and **Wayne** (S. Snyder).

**Yellow-bellied flycatcher:** Seen at **Magee** 9 May (R. Nirschl), and **Killdeer** 10 May (T. Shively). High count 10, at **Magee** 25 May (E. Tramer).

**Acadian flycatcher:** First seen 29 Apr, at **Shawnee SF** (B. Royse) and in **Hocking** (D. Horn), with migrants still passing through **Magee** as singles 20, 22, and 23 May (R&S Harlan).

**Alder flycatcher:** First to appear was one in **Zaleski SF** 6 May (D. Weber). R&S Harlan found a surprising 15 at **Magee** 23 May, and E. Tramer nine at **CPNWR** the 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Willow flycatcher:** Jay Stenger found the earliest, at the **VOA** 5 May; by the 9<sup>th</sup>, three were at **Magee** (R&S Harlan). Three were singing in **Conneaut's** harbor 31 May (C. Holt).

**Least flycatcher:** **Clermont** greeted the first on 24 Apr (B. Foppe). R&S Harlan found 10 at **Magee** on 9 May, and five as late as the 23<sup>rd</sup>. J. Fry discovered a singing male 29 May at the **Hocking** spot where one summered in 2006.

**Eastern phoebe:** Any wintering birds were reinforced 13 Mar in **Shawnee SF** with 38 reported (B. Royse); the same day, arrivals were noted in **Mahoning** (C. Holt) and **Holmes** (E. Schlabach). Three reached **Magee** 22 Mar (R. Nirschl).

**Great crested flycatcher:** First detected in **Summit's Nimisila Res** 23 Apr (R&S Harlan), 46 were found in the **CVNP** census of 12 May.

**Eastern kingbird:** B. Crow found one in **Vinton** on schedule 22 Apr. M. Anderson reported 40 migrants at **Metzger** by 8 May.

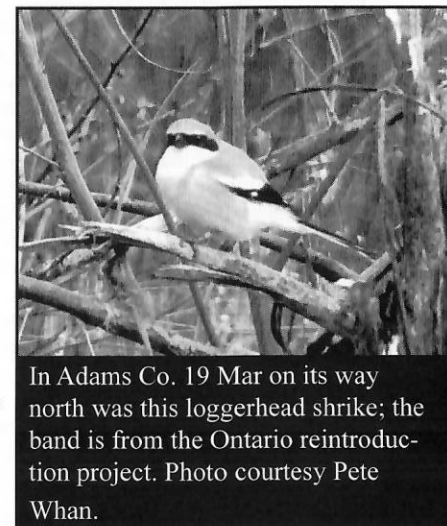
**Scissor-tailed flycatcher:** Reported from **Cuyahoga Co** 23 April. Documentation is needed.

**Loggerhead shrike:** On 19 Mar, a banded individual of this species was photographed in **Adams**; it was later determined to be one of 14 pairs in **Ontario's** reintroduction project. Another was banded in **Ottawa** 5 May.

**Northern shrike:** Winter's **Deer Ck** bird remained 5 Mar (B. Royse). A. Newman found one at **Woodbury WA** 8 Mar, and B. Kinkead one off the **Magee** causeway 17 Mar. C. Slater had another at **Egypt Valley WA** 19 Mar (*vide* J. McCormac). An imm at **Sandy Ridge Res'n** was present 20 Mar (R. Schneider). One at **Wolf Ck Environmental Ctr (Medina)** spent 14 Mar (D. Kersten) through 7 Apr (D. Bertsch). One at **GRWA** on 24 Mar was latish (C. Holt).

**White-eyed vireo:** Arrived in **Hocking** 15 Apr (B. Placier), with a 30 Apr report from **Magee** (N. Gilbert).

**Bell's vireo:** A. Betuel announced the return of what was likely last year's male to the **OSU campus** 10 May; A. Wolfe late the same day observed two birds. B. Royse announced the discovery of another, near **Deer Ck SP**, on 31 May.



In Adams Co, 19 Mar on its way north was this loggerhead shrike; the band is from the Ontario reintroduction project. Photo courtesy Pete Whan.

**Yellow-throated vireo:** Two showed up in *Meigs* on 21 Apr (T. Morman). R&S Harlan observed a late migrant at *Magee* on 22 May.

**Blue-headed vireo:** Arrived in the state via *Adams* 20 Mar (P. Whan), and was found in *Hocking* two days later, where two nests were confirmed by 13 May (both J. Watts). Fourteen were in *Shawnee SF* 2 Apr (B. Royse); the CVNP census found four 12 May, and E. Schlabach one in *Tuscarawas* 17 May.

**Warbling vireo:** Arrived in *Cincinnati* (B. Hull) and *EFSP* (B. Stanley) on 21 Apr. The CVNP census of 12 May tallied a healthy 74, versus 84 of the ubiquitous red-eyed.

**Philadelphia vireo:** Reported earliest at *Indian Ck WA* in *Brown* 5 May (Jay Stenger). E. Schlabach had two in *Holmes* 10 May, the only report of multiple birds.

**Red-eyed vireo:** Arrived as a cohort of half a dozen at *Shawnee SF* 22 Apr (M. Studebaker)

**Blue jay:** On 18 Mar, a cohort of 50 moved through *Indian Ck WA* in *Brown* (B. Stanley). M. Anderson estimated 3500 had passed over *Metzger* by mid-morning on 8 May. E. Tramer remarked that despite these multitudes, the species has been locally depressed in numbers this year. He offered results of systematic roadside surveys taken this year and last in the oak openings near *Toledo*, with the following results: 47 jays on Mar 8 '06, versus only eight on 25 Mar '07; 38 on 11 Apr '06, versus only four on 16 Apr '07; 29 on 28 Apr '06, versus only seven on 27 Apr '07; 24 on 8 May '06, versus only 10 on 3 May '07.

**Purple martin:** C. Dusthimer had two at *Buckeye Lk* 30 Mar. The 17<sup>th</sup> of Apr in *Clermont* (B. Stanley), and the following day in *Lucas* (G. Links), brought other birds after the end of the last cold spell.

**Tree swallow:** Reported 2 Mar at *BCSP* (B. Menker) and 3 Mar in *Hamilton* (F. Frick), they were much slower to reach the northern counties, such as on the 24<sup>th</sup> in *Trumbull* (C. Holt) and the 25<sup>th</sup> in *Paulding* (Dunakins).

**Northern rough-winged swallow:** Early arrivals included 22 Mar in *Clermont* (D. Morse), 23 Mar at *HBSP* (R. Hannikman, ph, a new local early record), and one at the *Senecaville fish hatchery* 24 Mar (E. Schlabach).

**Bank swallow:** Early was one 16 Apr in *Wood* (P. Chad). Reached *Holmes* by 20 Apr (E. Schlabach) and *Springville Marsh SMP* by the 22<sup>nd</sup> (T. Bartlett).

**Cliff swallow:** M. Schlabach noticed the first on 1 Apr pretty early, in *Holmes*.

**Barn swallow:** E. Schlabach spotted the earliest at *Senecaville* in *Guernsey* 24 Mar.

**Carolina wren:** Decent numbers were generally reported in the north. C. Holt had one at *Conneaut* 20 May.

**House wren:** On 22 Apr, birds were found at *MWW* (S. Pelikan) and in *Delaware* (R. Lowry). No interesting high count was available, perhaps because these wrens are too feisty to move ensemble.

**Winter wren:** Singing males were at *Funk* 22 Mar (B. Glick), *Fort Ancient* 28 Apr (D. Dister), and *Mohican SF* 20 May (B. Placier). D. Chasar reported the species 11, 19, 20, 27 Apr and 25 May at *Brecksville Res'n*.

**Sedge wren:** Detected earliest 29 Apr in *Pickaway* (P. Rodewald), with 30 Apr birds in *Knox* (B. Warner) and *HBSP* (S. Isacco). On 24 May, two were at *Tri-Valley WA* (Warner) and three near *Killbuck WA* (J. Herman). One sang at *Magee* 25 May (E. Tramer). Several occupied *ONWR* 13 May (m obs).

**Marsh wren:** Apr 25 brought one to *SVWA* (B. Powell), while four reached *Conneaut* by 27 Apr (C. Holt); five were installed at *Sandy Ridge Res'n* in *Lorain* 30 May (C. Caldwell).

**Golden-crowned kinglet:** T. Bartlett tallied 119 for the *Kelleys Isl* census of 26 Mar. A pair was seen near a former nest site in *Mohican SF* 30 Apr (B. Glick), and nesting was suspected in a hemlock grove at *Clear Ck MP* in *Hocking* 7 May (K. Miller). One at *Magee* as late as 15 May (B. Zwiebel) was still on its way north.

**Ruby-crowned kinglet:** A feeder-assisted wintering bird in *Ashland* was last seen 30 Mar (T. Leslie). S. Pelikan found one in *Cincinnati* 22 Mar. A record high for *CPNWR* was 88 on 28 Apr (E. Tramer), while P. Chaon counted 65-70 at *Shaker Lks* 23 Apr, and K. Kaufman 170+ at *Magee* 1 May, where the latest was observed 22 May (R&S Harlan).

**Blue-gray gnatcatcher:** First reported in *Adams* 23 Mar (P. Whan), 43 crowded *CPNWR* 28 Apr (E. Tramer).

**Veery:** First reported 27 Apr at *Brecksville* (D. Chasar); the first nest at *Clear Ck MP* was confirmed 13 May (J. Watts). Seven were the last reported migrants, at *Magee* on 23 May (R&S Harlan).

**Gray-cheeked thrush:** Arrived via overflight at *Magee* 29 Apr (G. Leidy). Ten remained 23 May (R&S Harlan).

**Swainson's thrush:** Good numbers, by accounts. K. Kaufman reported the first, at *Magee* 23 Apr. R&S Harlan had 25 there 23 May, and a latish one at *Cuyahoga Falls* 31 May.

**Hermit thrush:** Early were two singing males, seemingly on territory, in *Waterloo SF* in *Athens* 3 Apr (B. Royse). On territory in *Clear Ck MP* and *Old Man's Cave SP* were other males on 27 May (T. Shively). Twenty gathered at *Magee* 21 Apr (R&S Harlan), and quite late there was an imm male migrant on 23 May (J. Dunn *vide* Harlan).

**Wood thrush:** Four reports came from southern counties of their arrival on 22 Apr.

**American robin:** Beyond this season's many winterers, robin migration was well underway on 25 Mar, when J. Pogacnik counted 1070 along the shore in *Lake*, and T. Bartlett 628 on *Kelleys Island*.

**Gray catbird:** Reports of catbirds in *Stark* 14 Mar (K. Fenstermaker) and in *Franklin* 30 Mar (V. Fazio) more likely represented over-wintering individuals than early arrivals. One apparently arrived at *HWSP* 24 Apr (D. Russell).

**Northern mockingbird:** E. Tramer noted some missing from traditional spots near *Toledo*, and wondered if cold and snow had done them in. Increased competition for food from hordes of robins this year may have played a part, too.

**Brown thrasher:** One 11 Mar at *MWW* (S. Bobonick) may have spent the winter. Certainly an overflier was one at *HBSP* on 23 Mar (R. Hannikman *vide* L. Rosche).

**American pipit:** Reports spanned the winter months, but a migrant push began with 10 at **Gilmore Ponds** 3 Mar (M. Busam), ~40 in **Darke** 17 Mar (R. Schieltz), then ~20 the day the ice broke up around **S. Bass Isl** 23 Mar (L. Brohl), and 68 in **Hardin** the following day (R. Counts). The high count was 225 at **KPWA** 4 Apr (B. Kinkead). Good numbers in May included ~125 at **Metzger** 8 May (M. Anderson), 90 in **Tuscarawas** 12 May (E. Schlabach). Stragglers were two in **Conneaut** 20 May (C. Holt) and another duo at **Metzger** 25 May (K. Kaufman).

**Cedar waxwing:** Their numbers fluctuate, and trended down this spring, even with a high count of 125 seen at **Metzger Marsh** 8 May (M. Anderson), probably due to the April freeze.

**Blue-winged warbler:** First reported 22 Apr s. of **Columbus** (B. Royse), with one at **Magee** within five days (R. Nirschl). The **CVNP** had good numbers as usual, with 55 on the census of 12 May.



An SY male blue-winged warbler captured for banding 22 April at HWSP. Photo from Dave Russell.

**Golden-winged warbler:** All reports follow: male 28 Apr **Shawnee SF** (B. Sparks), 30 Apr in **Paulding** (M&D Dunakin), male **Tiffin** 1 May (T. Bartlett), male **The Wilds** 3 May (J. Larson), 3 May **OSU campus** (S. Matthews *vide* P. Rodewald), 4 May at **BCSP** (D. Overacker), **Blendon Wds MP** in **Columbus** 5 May (D. Linzell), **Delaware SP** 5 May (Jack Stenger), in **Licking** 6-8 May (C. Dusthimer), male with atypical song **Highbanks MP** in **Delaware** 7 May (R. Lowry), **OSU campus** 7 May (A. Boone), birds netted at **Navarre** 7 & 9 May (BSBO), female **OSU campus** 8 May (D. Horn), **Magee Marsh** 8 May (R. Nirschl), two at **Metzger** 8 May (M. Anderson), two at **Riverbend** in **Hancock** 8 May (B. Hardesty), 8 May in the **CVNP** (D. Chasar), singing male 22 May at **Battelle-Darby MP** in **Franklin** (J. Kuenzli).



A male golden-winged warbler mist-netted on the OSU campus 3 May by S. Matthews. Photo P. Rodewald.

**"Brewster's" warbler:** Only one report emerged of this hybrid of the above two species. At **BCSP** 4 May, D. Overacker encountered a bird with golden wing-bars that otherwise resembled a blue-winged warbler.

**Tennessee warbler:** Appearing as early as 22 Apr at **Magee** (R. Nirschl), a flight at **HBSP** on 20 May numbered ~40 (R. Hannikman).

**Orange-crowned warbler:** The remarkable wintering bird in **Columbus** was last seen 8 Mar (N. Nye). Also there was the first on a more conventional schedule, on 17 Apr (D. Horn). Last reported at **Magee** 12 May (C. Dusthimer).

**Nashville warbler:** In **Columbus** by 23 Apr (A. Boone), sixty were found at **Metzger** 8 May (M. Anderson).

**Northern parula:** One along the Scioto R in **Columbus** 2 Apr was an overflyer (S. Landes), with the first more conventional migrant reported singing in **Vinton** 6 Apr (D. Hess). At **Magee**, 15 were present 9 May (R&S Harlan), and C. Holt had one in **Conneaut** as late as 20 May.

**Hybrid northern parula X cerulean warbler:** Returned for the fourth consecutive year to its **Toledo** haunts 24 Apr (R. Nirschl).

**Yellow warbler:** Reported 22 Apr first, in **Cincinnati** (A. Oliver), **Muskingum** (J. Larson), **Magee** (R. Nirschl), and **Springville Marsh, Seneca** (T. Bartlett). C. Holt had 47 in one **Mahoning** locale 8 May, and R&S Harlan ~50 the following day at **Magee**. The 12 May **CVNP** census tallied 181.

**Chestnut-sided warbler:** Five birds 27-28 Apr were territorial in two locales in the **Shawnee SF** (B. Sparks), at one of which breeding was confirmed last year. One was netted in **Ottawa** 23 Apr (BSBO).

**Magnolia warbler:** Appeared on schedule 4 May in **Hamilton** (S. Castellano) and **BCSP** (D. Overacker).

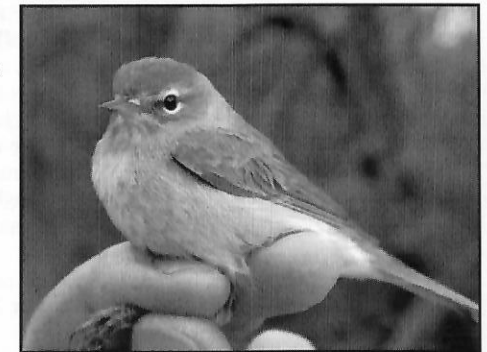
**Cape May warbler:** First reported from **Cincinnati** 29 Apr (N. Keller), by 1 May three males had reached **Magee** (K. Kaufman). P. Rodewald reported 38 there and nearby in **ONWR** on 10 May.

**Black-throated blue warbler:** Quite early was one in **Licking** 22 Apr (H. Nagy), with one in **Seneca** 28 Apr (T. Bartlett). A. Boone made a notable count of 32 on 16 May at **Magee**.

**Yellow-rumped warbler:** K. Kaufman estimated ~500 at **Magee**, mostly ad males, 24 Apr, and ~180 there on 1 May. The last report from **Magee** came 22 May (R&S Harlan).

**Black-throated green warbler:** Five were singing in **Zaleski SF**'s pines by 3 Apr (B. Royse). In **Hancock**, 18 were counted 12 May (B. Hardesty), and 23 were in the **CVNP** for their census of the same day.

**Blackburnian warbler:** Touched down widely on 22 Apr: **MWW** (S. Pelikan), **Seneca** (T. Bartlett), and **Magee** (R. Nirschl). Nirschl reported ~40 at **Magee** by 8 May, and E. Tramer 16 at **CPNWR** the 12<sup>th</sup>. One remained in the **CVNP** 25 May (D. Chasar), and another was singing on territory at **Rock House (Hocking)** the 27<sup>th</sup> (T. Shively).



This young orange-crowned warbler, captured for banding at HWSP 23 April, shows the drab plumage of the eastern race *celata*. Photo courtesy of Dave Russell.

**Yellow-throated warbler:** First reported by V. Fazio in *Adams* and *Scioto* 29 Mar. B. Royle had 20 in the latter county by 2 Apr; the following day he had 13 singing males in *Zaleski SF*, all in pines rather than sycamores.

**Pine warbler:** Wintering birds continued, in *Pickaway* through 3 Mar (E. Reiner) and near *Cincinnati* through 26 Apr (L. Keene). One was singing in *Franklin* 10 Mar (D. Linzell), and 13 in *Scioto* the 13<sup>th</sup> (B. Royle). One tended territory near *Pymatuning Res* 27 Apr (C. Holt). E. Tramer reported scattered pine warblers in the oak openings near *Toledo*, but observed the elimination of pine plantations there makes their local future doubtful.

**Kirtland's warbler:** An observation in *Wooster* 23 May was documented for the OBRC.

**Prairie warbler:** First reported was a singing male in Ohio's prairie warbler stronghold, *Adams Co.*, on 15 Apr (P. Whan). G. Leidy found a wayward one at *HBSP* 28 Apr.

**Palm warbler:** An early bird touched down 31 Mar at *Sandy Ridge* in *Lorain* (T. Colburn); it was of the yellow eastern race. Other eastern birds showed up 2 Apr at *Magee* (R. Nirschl), 27 Apr in *Summit* (D. Kramer), and 29 Apr at *LSR* (J. Pogacnik). K. Kaufman estimated 50 palms at *Magee* 1 May, and the last was at *MBSP* 23 May (R&S Harlan).

**Bay-breasted warbler:** First reported with 13 individuals in *Cincinnati* on 5 May (B. Stanley).

**Blackpoll warbler:** First reported as an overflight at *Magee* on 24 Apr (R. Nirschl *vide* K. Kaufman), 50+ were at *HBSP* 23-24 May (R. Hannikman), then 33 at *CPNWR* 26 May (E. Tramer), with two hanging on at *Conneaut* 31 May (C. Holt).

**Cerulean warbler:** Apr 22 marked its arrival, with reports from *Shawnee* (M. Studebaker, B. Hull), *MWW* (S. Pelikan), and *Clermont* (D. Fankhauser). High count was 30 in the *Zaleski SF* on 2 May (D. Weber). T. Kemp (*vide* E. Tramer) reported probable nesting in the oak openings of *Toledo* in late May: a male was singing in a site formerly occupied in nearby *Secor MP* on 21 May: these events may signal a return of ceruleans as a nesting species there.

**Black-and-white warbler:** Arrived 2 Apr at *Shawnee*, where 14 were witnessed 17 Apr (B. Royle). At *Magee*, the high was 20 on 1 May (K. Kaufman).

**American redstart:** By 22 Apr, 18 were already at *Shawnee SF* (M. Studebaker), and by 24 May, 100+, nearly all first-year males and females, were to be found at *Magee* (G. Leidy).

**Prothonotary warbler:** A very early arrival, a male evidently well seen in *Columbus*, came on 29 Mar (R. Williams), where the local early record is 10 Apr. In *Delaware*, 82 territories were found by 11 May, with 108 by the 25<sup>th</sup> (C. Bombaci). J. Fry found two in *Vinton* 19 May. C. Holt saw one at *Berlin Res* 22 May, and R&S Harlan found one in song at *Magee* 23 May.

**Worm-eating warbler:** J. McCormac reported 10-15 in *Shawnee SF* 22 Apr, and one was banded in *Tiffin* the following day (D. Plotts). Three reached *Magee* on 27 Apr (R. Nirschl).

**Ovenbird:** Arrived 21 Apr in *Meigs* (T. Morman), with 25 present in *Scioto* by 19 May (L. Gardella), and 15 at *Magee* 9 May (R&S Harlan).

**Northern waterthrush:** First found as part of an overflight at *Magee* 24 Apr (K. Kaufman), seven were there by the 27<sup>th</sup> (R. Nirschl), and three still hung around on 23 May (R&S Harlan).

**Louisiana waterthrush:** Arrived first 24 Mar in *EFSP* (L. Romine). By 2 Apr, B. Royle heard 27 at *Shawnee SF*.

**Kentucky warbler:** First reported from *EFSP* 23 Apr (G. Fantetti), 2-3 reached *Magee* by 8 May (R. Nirschl).

**Connecticut warbler:** Starting fairly early were birds near *Toledo* on 11 May (M. Anderson), *Magee* 12 May (G. Miller), *ONWR* 17 May (B. Warner), *Delaware SP* 18 May (B. Shively), and 20 May at *Magee* (P. Rodewald) and at the *CVNP* (D. Chasar). BSBO banders reported Connecticuts May 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 30 in *Ottawa*.

**Mourning warbler:** Widely reported the second week of May, with a high count of six at *HBSP* 22 May (S. Wagner).

**Common yellowthroat:** Reported 23 Apr from s. of *Columbus* (B. Royle), *Cincinnati* (B. Zimmerman), and *SVWA* (J. Lehman), ten were at *Magee* by the 30<sup>th</sup> (N. Gilbert).

**Hooded warbler:** First at *Shawnee SF* 13 Apr (M. Studebaker), a female lingered at *Magee* 20 May (R&S Harlan).

**Wilson's warbler:** K. Kaufman reported a few at *Magee* 8 May for the first; 20 were there 20-21 May (R&S Harlan).

**Canada warbler:** Latish, the first was seen at *Caesar Ck Sp* 10 May (E. Baumgardner). A. Boone tallied 31 at *Magee* 19 May. Territories were established at *Clear Ck MP* and *Old Man's Cave* in *Hocking* 27 May (T. Shively).

**Yellow-breasted chat:** L. Harder described one near *Oak Hbr* in *Ottawa* early on 20 Apr. D. Patick counted 20 at *Crown City WA* in *Gallia/Lawrence* on 20 May.

**Summer tanager:** Appeared 24 Apr in *Clermont* (B. Foppe), then at *Metzger* the 27<sup>th</sup> (R. Nirschl).

**Scarlet tanager:** An unmistakable male near *Chillicothe* 3 Apr (J. McMahon) furnished a second-earliest state record. B. Roach photographed a rare orange male at *Magee* 17 May. In the realm of the expected, one touched down in *Cincinnati* 22 Apr (B. Hull), and 13 were counted in *Toledo's* oak openings 15 May (E. Tramer).

**Spotted towhee:** The *Toledo*-area rarity of winter was last seen 20 Apr by its discoverer and host J. Dixon.

**American tree sparrow:** Last reported 20 Apr at *Pine Lk, Ashtabula* (C. Holt).

**Clay-colored sparrow:** One was at *Magee* 1 May (K. Kaufman) through 5 May (A. Newman), and another in w. *Toledo* 2 May (G. Levalenti *vide* G. Links), while another was in song at *Metzger* 8 May (M. Anderson). P. Rodewald happened upon one at *ONWR* 10 May, and C. Holt another at *Conneaut* 20 May.

**Field sparrow:** Five were in *Hardin* 10 Mar (R. Counts), and six in *Hancock* 13 Mar (*vide* B. Hardesty).

**Vesper sparrow:** One was on territory in *Tuscarawas* 29 Mar (B. Glick), and the first returned to *Wood* 1 Apr (B. Cullen), with another in *Hancock* two days later (B. Hardesty). Seems to be often overlooked.

**Lark sparrow:** The *Toledo* colony numbered six on 24 Apr (J. Moss), and among encouraging signs from SW Ohio was three once more at the *Oakes Quarry* in *Greene* 20 May (D. Snuffer).

**Savannah sparrow:** One devoted to E. Schlabach's feeder in *Holmes* since early Feb last visited 7 Mar. Appeared 3 Mar in *Clermont* (P. Krusling), with an appearance at *HBSP* 25 Mar (R. Hannikman). High count 21 in *Hardin* 19 May (R. Counts).

**Grasshopper sparrow:** Arrived 10 Apr in *Pickaway* (B. Royse).

**Le Conte's sparrow:** Even rarer in spring, one was found at *Irwin Prairie* w. of *Toledo* 28 Apr (R. Nirschl).

**Fox sparrow:** Five showed up at a *Columbus* park 4 Mar (P. Raver). Later in the month, high counts were achieved of ~60 on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and ~70 on the 26<sup>th</sup> at *Magee* (R. Nirschl), then a notable 140+ at *Wintergarden Pk* in *Wood* the 30<sup>th</sup> (G. Links). Latest report came from *Magee* 6 May (R&S Harlan).



Rick Asamoto photographed this fledgling from the lark sparrow nesting at Oakes Quarry near Dayton on 28 May.

**Lincoln's sparrow:** One was banded at *Gilmore Ponds* 22 Apr (S. Pawlowski *vide* M. Busam), with 15 seen at *Metzger* 8 May (M. Anderson). The last three were reported from *Magee* on 23 May (R&S Harlan).

**Swamp sparrow:** First seen at *EFSP* 12 Mar (D. Morse), with two at *Springville Marsh* in *Seneca* 17 Mar (T. Bartlett). High count 20 at *Magee* 21 Apr by R&S Harlan.

**White-throated sparrow:** Numerous as always during early spring, the last report came from *Magee* on 16 May (A. Boone).

**Harris's sparrow:** The *Holmes* wonder of winter was last reported on 3 May (*vide* E. Schlabach), having molted into breeding plumage. Another breeding-plumaged bird graced a feeder in *Hamilton* 28-29 Apr.

**White-crowned sparrow:** Regarded as less numerous than usual by many, the last of these sparrows was reported on 31 May in *Conneaut* (C. Holt).

**Dark-eyed junco:** D. Chasar reported 3-4 territories in *Brecksville Res'n* 24 May. Late migrants: 10 May at *Magee* (P. Rodewald), 22 May in *Hancock* (B. Hardesty), and 24 May at *HBSP* (R. Hannikman).

**Lapland longspur:** G. Links had ~900 near *Metzger* 3 Mar. K. Overman reported "hundreds" near *ONWR* on 4 Mar. At the *Hardin* wetland, R. Counts reported 117 on 24 Mar, 280 on 30 Mar, 117 on 4 Apr, 156 on 14 Apr, and eight on 21 Apr. J. Kuenzli found ~200, many in alt plumage, along *KPWA's Washburn Rd* 13 Apr.



On 2 May, this disconsolate female rose-breasted grosbeak, a first for this Cincinnati location, regards a mulberry tree devastated by the April cold snap. Photo by Bill Zimmerman.

**Rose-breasted grosbeak:** Arrived early on 10 Apr in *Hamilton* (M. Wessel) and *Butler* (M. Guiseffi), and as far as *Magee* by 27 Apr (R. Nirschl). Twenty-five were at *Metzger* 8 May (M. Anderson). A census of *Hancock* turned up 33 on 12 May (B. Hardesty). Probably ranked first among unusual feeder visitors this season, perhaps because of widespread loss of buds, flowers, and fruits during the April cold spell.

**Blue grosbeak:** Increasingly plenteous, by all accounts. First reported in *Adams* 27 Apr (P. Whan), one was at a familiar *Pickaway* location the following day (S. Landes) with two males there 28 May (J. Fry), then another two days later up in *Holmes* (B. Glick). Birds were in *Clermont* 2 May (B. Hull), *Morgan* 2 May (G. Crippen), *KPWA* 10 May (T. Shively), two in *Dayton* 12 May (E&B Neubauer), and one in *Franklin* 15 May (E. Reiner). D. Patick reported six from seldom-visited *Crown City WA* in *Lawrence/Gallia* on 20 May. Records further north are not lacking, but tend to occur later: a pair was at *Tri-Valley WA* 24 May (B. Warner), two in *Toledo* 25 May (S. Duris), one in *Logan* 27 May (Shively), and a first *Richland* record (a first-summer male) 28-30 May (J. Herman). One was spotted 29 May in a *Cincinnati* park (Hull).



Not your everyday Logan County feeder-bird was this female blue grosbeak on 27 May. Photo courtesy of LeeAnn Swonguer.

**Indigo bunting:** Arrived at *HWSP* 24 Apr (J. Perry), and by 8 May M. Anderson was to report 55 at *Metzger*.

**Dickcissel:** First announced from *Hardin* 5 May (B. Warner), soon became widespread in suitable habitat in the western three tiers of counties.

**Bobolink:** First reported from *Seneca* (T. Bartlett) and *Holmes* (J. Miller) on 28 Apr, soon occupied suitable habitats statewide.

**Red-winged blackbird:** Two thousand at **Gilmore Ponds** on 4 Mar was of note (J. Lippert).

**Eastern meadowlark:** Appeared, especially in the western counties, in customary numbers; interesting was a flyby of ~75 at **HBSP Mar** (R. Hannikman).

**Western meadowlark:** One in rural **Wood** found 30 Mar (G. Links) remained, apparently unmated, through at least 19 May for m. obs.

**Yellow-headed blackbird:** T. Bartlett came across the first, a male at **Magee**, on 1 Apr, and two more at **Springville Marsh** in **Seneca** 14 Apr. Other NW marshes sightings included multiple observations at a cattail marsh in **ONWR** throughout May (m obs), where blackbirds nested last year, and one in **Ottawa** 19 Apr (BSBO). Farther afield, J. Kubicki reported one in **Cuyahoga** 23 Apr, and J. Moore videotaped one in **Highland** 30 Apr (records in the SW counties are casual at best).

**Rusty blackbird:** Reported in numbers >100 mostly in the northern counties, led by 300+ just SE of **ONWR** on 26 Mar (K. Kaufman). Last seen in **ONWR** 10 May (P. Rodewald).

**Brewer's blackbird:** Even scarcer than usual, with J. Pogacnik offering the only reports: two near **ONWR** 8 Apr, and one at his **Lake** feeder 15 Apr.

**Common grackle:** The largest number came from a phenomenal blackbird roost at **Gilmore Ponds** in **Butler** on 4 Mar--9000 (J. Lippert).

**Orchard oriole:** Apparently arrived 23 Apr at **Camp Dennison** in **Hamilton** (B. Foppe), and stayed in good numbers. High counts were ~15 at **Metzger** 8 May (M. Anderson) and 11 at **LSR** 13 May (J. Pogacnik).

**Baltimore oriole:** First reported from Cincinnati's **Winton Wds** 11 Apr (J. Lippert), by 8 May M. Anderson was to see 140+ in a fallout at **Metzger**.

**Purple finch:** Moved north in Mar, after reports from **MWW** (N. Cade) on the 6<sup>th</sup>. E. Schlabach had one singing at his farm in **Holmes** 21 Mar-21 May. Deep snow in the **Chardon** area brought concentrations of 15 or more to C. Crockett's feeders on 8 Apr. J. Fry's **Hocking** feeders attracted two 1-2 May and a female 3 May. At former nesting sites, C. Caldwell saw one in **Mohican SF** 19 May, and R&S Harlan a pair at **Hinckley MP** in **Medina** 15 May. C. Holt had one in **Ashtabula** 31 May.

**Common redpoll:** Remarkable was one at a **Franklin** feeder 12-15 Apr (B. Master, ph).

**Pine siskin:** Little was heard of this species. J. Pogacnik had one at his **Lake** feeders as late as 13 May.



Surely among the most unexpected spring appearances was that of a common redpoll at a feeder in Worthington, Franklin Co on 12-15 Apr. Photograph courtesy of Bernard Master.

**Evening grosbeak:** Seen only once in a while these days, and often enough in the center of the state's NE quadrant, as was the only one reported this spring, a female at a **Holmes** feeder 22 May (*fide* B. Glick).

**Contributors:** We are indebted to the following 291 individuals and organizations who contributed sightings data to the Reports: David Ackerman, Scott Albaugh, Zachary Allen, Matt Anderson, Nancy Anderson, Rick Asamoto, Carole Babyak, Tom Bain, Tom Bartlett, Leslie Basalla, Erich Baumgardner, Jon Benedetti, Greg Bennett, Joe Bens, Dan Bertsch, Andy Bess, Adam Betuel, Steve Bobonick, Mark Bogosian, Brad Bolton, Charlie Bombaci, Aaron Boone, Jill Bowers, Bruce Bowman, Margaret Bowman, Michael Boyd, Marcia Brehmer, Gary Brevoort, Lisa Brohl, Jeff Brown, Lori Brumbaugh, Jen Brumfield, Gina Buckley, Mike Busam, Neill Cade, Steve Cagan, Craig Caldwell, Ron Canterbury, Steve Castellano, Paul Chad, Philip Chaon, Ann Chasar, Dwight Chasar, Chris Clingman, Suzanne Clingman, Tim Colborn, Denis Conover, Sam Corbo, Rick Counts, Gary Cowell, Rich Cressman, Glenn Crippen, Carol Crockett, Ben Crow, Greg Cudworth, Becky Cullen, Jeff Cullen, Stephen Cunliffe, Ken Davis, Dave Dister, Jan Dixon, Jim Dolan, Laura Dornan, Linda Dudzinski, Janet Duerr, Doug Dunakin, Micki Dunakin, Jon Dunn, Sherrie Duris, Curt Dusthimer, John Edwards, Shane Egleston, David Fankhauser, Ginny Fantetti, Barbara Fate, Joe Faulkner, Vic Fazio, Kani Fenstermaker, Doug Fisher, Chris Followay, Bob Foppe, Frank Frick, Darlene Friedman, August Froehlich, Jim Fry, Larry Gara, Lou Gardella, Paul Gardner, Neil Gilbert, Mark Giuseffi, Bruce Glick, Dean Good, Darlena Graham, Lee Gruber, John Habig, Don Hadley, Joe Hammond, Scott Hannan, Ray Hannikman, Lois Harder, Betty Hardesty, Rob Harlan, Sandy Harlan, Benjamin Hart, Jim Heflich, Bill Heck, John Herman, Dave Hess, Linda Hice, Alex Hickey, Levi Hochstetler, Craig Holt, Dave Horn, Gabe Hostetler, Bill Hull, John Hull, Kathi Hutton, Cindy Hurley, Sally Isacco, Shari Jackson, Andy Jones, Bill Jones, Kenn Kaufman, Laura Keene, Ned Keller, Tom Kemp, Dave Kersten, Scott Kimball, Bill Kinkead, Denise Kissel, Ethan Kistler, Everitt Kitchen, Hans Klebsch, Dennis Kline, Chris Knoll, Paul Knoop, Ron Kolde, Mary Krejci, Jo Ann Kubicki, John Kuenzli, Jean Kuns, Steve Landes, Jason Larson, Jay Lehman, Gabe Leidy, Tim Leslie, Greg Levalenti, Dave Lewis, Greg Links, Doreene Linzell, Jerry Lippert, Lou Loibl, Fred Losi, Rob Lowry, Paula Lozano, Bernard Master, Terri Martincic, Steve Matthews, Jim McCormac, Kathy McDonald, Joe McMahan, Bob McNulty, Brian Menker, Kevin Metcalfe, Greg Miller, Jeffrey Miller, Kent Miller, Mary Misplon, Kathy Mock, Jim Moore, Tracy Morman, Andrew Morrison, Donald Morse, Jeremy Moss, Heather Nagy, Kathy Neugebauer, Andy Newman, Jon Nicodemus, Rick Nirschl, Phillip North, Nathaniel Nye, Ann Oliver, Doug Overacker, Karl Overman, Al Parker, Anne Paschall, Pat Paternostro, David Patick, Sharon Pawlowski, Steve Pelikan, Jim Perry, John Petruzzi, Chris Pierce, Bob Placier, Doug Plant, Deb Plotts, John Pogacnik, Bob Powell, Pam Raver, Frank Renfrow, Ruth Richards, Larry Richardson, Richard Rickard, Bob Roach, Bryn Roberts, Keith Robinson, Paul Rodewald, Linda Romine, Tom & Mary Anne Romito, Larry Rosche, John Ross, Jeff Rowe, Bob Royse, Dave Russell, Dan Sanders, Winnie Sarno, Steve Schafer, Regina Schieltz, Ed Schlabach, Marty Schlabach, Robert Schlabach, Bob Schlake, Rita Schneider, Carleton Schooley, Ron Sempier, Andy Sewell, Douglas Sheldon, Troy Shively, Bruce Simpson, Shaune Skinner, Carl Slater, Dave Smith, Dennis Smoyer, Doug Snapp, Elaine Snively, Darlene Snuffer, Su Snyder, Chris Spagnoli, Tim Spahr, Brad Sparks, Bill Stanley, Gene Stauffer, Jack Stenger, Jay Stenger, Laura Stiefel, Matt Studebaker, Carol Takacs, Bill Thompson, Rob Thorn, Elliot Tramer, Roger Troutman, Casey Tucker, Linda Utterberg, Mark Vass, Doug Vogus, Suzanne Wagner, Sue Walpole, Ben Warner, Mary Warren, John Watts, Wayne Wauligman, Annette Webb, Dan Weber, Mark Wessel, Kirk Westendorf, Bill Whan, Pete Whan, Paul Wharton, Brad Wilkinson, John Williams, Ransome Williams, Connie Wolcott, Andi Wolfe, Richard Wolinski, Susan Woolard, Alan Wormington, Scott Wright, Brian Wulker, Leroy E. Yoder, Levi Yoder, Sheryl Young, Bill Zimmerman, Mike Zuilhof, and Brian Zwiebel. We also gratefully acknowledge information received from the editors of *The Bobolink*, the *Cleveland Bird Calendar*, the Black Swamp Bird Observatory, and internet resources managed by the Ohio Ornithological Society, Chuck Anderson, and Ned Keller. Thanks also to our contributing photographers, who document the unusual and help readers encounter the beauty of birds with their work.

## Further Afield

by Robert Harlan  
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I enjoy a good road trip every now and then, and birding usually provides the perfect pretext, as if I really needed one. I'm not talking about a simple cross-the-state jaunt, chasing the rarity *du jour*, but rather a long, drawn-out ramble through parts unknown, half for the birding, and half for the journey itself. I savor these trips. If I could afford the time and the money, I'd probably never stop.

But I can't afford it, especially with gas prices, the bane of road-tripping birders everywhere, compelling us all to seriously consider switching to hybrid vehicles, subcompact vehicles, two-wheeled vehicles, equine vehicles, etc. Logically then, trip routing must be judiciously planned, due diligence must be stringently applied, and cost-benefit analyses must be prudently employed to account for all possible variable elements. Or, you could use my preferred method—wing it, charge it, and hope for the best.

At the beginning of each year, as my wife Sandy's vacation-day allotment is replenished, we begin to ponder reflectively over where we might want to visit during the year. As creatures of habit, we usually gravitate to two time-tested favorites—south Florida (more developed, closer, and considerably cheaper, since Sandy's parents own a condo in the area), or Texas (wilder, farther, and costlier, but much birdier and much more adventurous). In most years, we bite the bullet and spend much of April lavishly drinking in great Texas-sized gulps of spring migration amongst the auspicious coastal migrant traps, the lush and thorny subtropical forests, and the Colima-infested desert mountains of the Lone Star State, letting the waves of migration lap over us as they see fit. But not this year.

This year, and I must say without consulting me first, Sandy's sister Laurie decided to get married near her home in Boulder, Colorado, in June. Of course, with only a limited amount of vacation time available to us, our April Texas trip went bye-bye and a summer western swing took its place. So in early June we headed to Colorado, and did the wedding thing. I put on a tie (a field mark I will only rarely and begrudgingly adorn), consumed immoderate amounts of wedding cake, exchanged small talk with new extended family members and other mysterious attendees, all likely never to be seen again, wished the happy couple well, and then went birding. It was traumatic, but I survived.

I'm trusting that you savor road trips as much as I, and that you won't object too strenuously if we abandon Ohio's comfy borders this time around. After all, this column is entitled *Further Afield*, is it not?

And so, and in general, beginning in early June and for the next three

Harlan

weeks, we covered 13 states in a circuitous manner, first escorted west by the direct if mundane I-80, then swooping down to Boulder for the wedding. Our post-nuptial route had us passing through the Rocky Mountains on I-70 to our first multi-day destination, Moab, Utah, doorway to Arches and Canyonlands National Parks. From there, we headed northward past Great Salt Lake, stopping briefly on Antelope Island to acquire a life bird for Sandy, the exotic and splendid chukar, before continuing north to our primary destination, and a destination I wish to expand on in later paragraphs, Yellowstone National Park. After four days in Yellowstone, we reluctantly bolted back east through Montana and North Dakota, but not without detouring strategically to Arrowwood National Wildlife Refuge to hunt for another lifer for Sandy, the awe-inspiring and almost table-ready gray partridge. With these two lifers in hand, now only the noble Himalayan snowcock stands between us and the fulfillment of a lifetime goal—the completion of our Introduced and Countable *Phasianidae* List. Of course, after the partridge, even our joyride through Chicago's rush hour traffic seemed somehow anticlimactic.

But our trip was not confined to birding alone. We also vigorously collected various other sightings and experiences. We tallied license plates, for instance. We managed to spot plates from 46 states, missing only the expected Hawaii, plus the distant New England states of New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. This may not seem especially noteworthy, but considering that this past May we tallied plates from 28 states (and from 66 of Ohio's 88 counties) from the Magee Marsh parking lot alone, I think this reveals just how important our own state has become to road-tripping birders. I like that.

We also collected various historical "old west" sites along the way. We visited the rocky outcropping of Pompey's Pillar National Monument, east of Billings, Montana, which received its English name thanks to William Clark (of the Lewis and Clark "Corps of Discovery" Expedition) in 1806. Clark named the pillar after "Pomp," the infant son of their young American Indian guide Sacagawea. Clark carved his signature and the date of his visit into the rock, and today this is the only *in situ* evidence of the epic journey still in existence. In effect, this marking still claims the lands of the Louisiana Purchase for the United States, although I must assume the proper paperwork is also on file somewhere. The birding here was excellent along the shady and well-watered bottomlands bordering the Yellowstone River, and the mosquito crop was especially exquisite.

Also as part of our "old west" collecting theme, we toured the solemn Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, where the pride of New Rumley, Ohio, Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer, ran out of his accustomed luck and now lies buried with the 263 men in his charge. Birding-wise, many grasshopper sparrows found a proper home in the swaying prairie grasses, while a new breed of intruder, a Eurasian collared-dove, impetuously postured its way across the parking lot.

At Lookout Mountain in Golden, Colorado, we visited the grave of hunter, scout, and gadabout Buffalo Bill Cody, which unfortunately smacked a



bit too much of "Hollywood west," rather than "wild west," for our tastes. And speaking of Hollywood, we also look hard for grave of Tonto, but no could find.

So anyway, our first extended stop was at Moab, Utah, where we spent four days collecting arches on our hikes through Canyonlands and Arches National Parks, where the arid landscape can be accurately portrayed as a bouldery hybrid between Flintstonian and Seussian, accented with a dash of extraterrestrial, if one considers Upheaval Dome, now regarded as a probable meteor crater, and the jaw-dropping view from the Green River Overlook at Canyonlands, a plunge so profound, barren, alien, and abyssal that an observer might be excused for imagining him or herself hovering above the lunar surface. Now that's a long sentence.

Birds at Canyonlands and Arches were understandably few. Our most interesting birds were gray vireos, which we found at two spots in Arches, and a singing red-breasted nuthatch, which seemed hopelessly out of place. And blue-gray gnatcatchers, which to me always seem so peculiar and unexpected in dry pinyon-juniper scrub rather than in Ohio's moist deciduous woods, were common and seemed as peevisish as ever, utterly uninterested in my sentiments regarding their habitat preference. And so we moved on.

Heading northwards towards Yellowstone, we spent a birdy morning chukaring at Antelope Island State Park on Great Salt Lake, as I mentioned earlier. The causeway over to the island was teeming with willets, American avocets, black-necked stilts, and Wilson's phalaropes, all feasting on the lake's savory stew. At a few select sites in North America, there are simply too many birds to reasonably comprehend, and the mucky marshes of Great Salt Lake often generate just this sort of sensory overload. The birding here is apparently so good, or maybe the overload is so complete, that even long-extinct species can be found, if only rarely. It was here that we met an eager birder who breathlessly called me over to confirm or deny a tentative identification—upon which I firmly yet graciously assured him that his mourning dove was not in fact a passenger pigeon, a species which would have been a lifer for him. Recognizing that we could not hope to top this extraordinary feat, we moved on with some befuddlement, and with great alacrity.

As Yellowstone would be a "life park" for me, I was eager to experience how it would stand uniquely apart from all other national parks. I had done only a modicum of homework on the area, and of course had seen photos and videos in the past, but really I was hoping to be amazed by whichever wonderments came my way. And amazing wonders they were. No photos could do justice to the grim defile of the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone River. And certainly no words of mine could begin to do justice to the astonishing variety of volcano-powered thermal features, from gasping and belching fumaroles, to simmering and pungently sulphurous mud pots, to the seemingly endless palette of vividly hued hot springs, to the stars of the show, nature's shameless self-aggrandizers, the geysers. Altogether, Yellowstone was enormous, other-worldly, desperately stunning, and quite odd. I liked it, I

think.

Now it should be said that our first night within the park was something of a letdown. We had made reservations for a Frontier Cabin at Canyon Village, which we understood to be an intermediately-priced accommodation, but complete with a private bathroom, unlike some of the other more depauperate lodging arrangements in the park. And at \$100 a night, I felt we deserved a private bath, instead of a communal bath, or an outhouse, or a tree. Actually, our bathroom was fine; it was our heating unit that was nonfunctional, a factor of some importance given that it snowed earlier in the day. After a trip down to the office, and a visit from the repair crew, our thermostat soared up to 61 degrees (Fahrenheit), before settling off at 58 degrees, apparently exhausted from overwork. We were buoyed, however, with our view which overlooked a charming and quaint maintenance yard, with heavy machinery and great heaps of earth and rock nestled tastefully throughout. At least our furnishings were modern, as in Danish Modern, accented in festive teal and orange Eisenhower-era Naugahyde. On a more positive note, our private bath was supplied with a small scented soap in the shape of a teddy bear, which made me so deliriously happy I forgot all about my frigid digits, and the \$100 a night we were being charged.

Actually, as the years pass, I fear that I am becoming increasingly prissy in my choice of lodging. Whereas not too many years ago I was satisfied with camping or sleeping in the back of our van, now I seem to require a proper bed, cable television, and some sort of continental breakfast, without which I become curiously cranky. I don't envy those travelers who are forced to do without breakfasts consisting of supermarket-sample-sized muffins, self-made waffles, and machine-dispensed orange "juice." Or without expanded cable-channel lineups including the poker channel, the crocodile channel, the cage-fighting channel, and the large block of channels apparently owned and operated by this Rachael Ray woman. At least that's how it seems. But I digress.

The birds at Yellowstone were surprisingly limited, at least in the areas where we explored. We saw exactly one other birder the entire time we were there, but even more dubious was the utter lack of local birding materials available in the park's many gift shops and nature centers. No substantial book on local birds or birding, not even a park bird checklist, could be found. We inquired about this rather glaring omission, and a park employee only half-jokingly told us that although a checklist was available online, they didn't stock any within the park because there was little call for one, and because there were only five birds to be found in the park anyway...the black one (common raven), the blue one (mountain bluebird), etc. You get the point. People apparently are interested in bison and bears, geysers and gushing mud pots, but not birds—which is too bad.

But there were still many birds to be found, as varied as a group of six male harlequin ducks, to Brewer's sparrows and sage thrashers, to red crossbills, to more Barrow's goldeneyes than I've ever seen in my life. The

birding was intriguing, but even for dedicated birders like us, it still took a back seat to geyser collecting, thermal feature gawking, waterfall watching, bison, elk, moose, and grizzly photo-ops, and many fascinating and instructive hours of tourist study.

Even though June, when we visited, is not yet considered peak tourism season for Yellowstone, tourists were aplenty. And even though warning signs were strategically placed throughout the park, and even though copious volumes of cautionary literature was handed out at the entrance gates, and even though common sense would seem to dictate otherwise, a select few tourists continue to prove that common sense is not as common as one might think. After all, despite its 130+ year legacy as a popular tourist destination, Yellowstone is still singularly a very wild place over 99% of its surface area, abounding with tempting yet deadly volcano-driven hot springs, appalling declivities, capricious weather, tranquil yet frigid lakes, and seemingly tame, but decidedly wild and unpredictable large mammals. The combination of welcoming tourist trappings mixed with the harsh realities listed above serves to make Yellowstone a deceptively civilized place, perfectly safe for the wary, but perilous for the oblivious, the frivolous, or the just plain hapless.

While we were at Yellowstone, we witnessed a few lapses of tourist judgment, such as a family “sneaking up on” a bison for an even-closer photo, while dozens of more sensible people watched from a respectable distance; a woman getting on her hands and knees, leaning over the edge of a boardwalk for an extreme close-up shot of a boiling hot spring; even herds of rampaging toddlers running down boardwalks, with parents nowhere to be seen.

But these tragedies-waiting-to-happen are all trifling in comparison to the lengthy chronicle of true tragedies that have occurred at Yellowstone over the years. While calamitous, they still have a way of tweaking a sense of morbid curiosity in all of us, or at least in me.

While in the park, I bought a fascinating book by Yellowstone’s historical archivist, Lee H. Whittlesey, entitled *Death in Yellowstone: Accidents and Foolhardiness in the First National Park* (Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1995). Over 276 pages, Whittlesey describes the myriad ways people have found to conclude their lives within or just outside the park, while omitting such mundane methods as routine car accidents and illness. A few choice examples follow:

*Death by hot dog*—On July 20, 1981, David Kirwan, 24, dove headlong into Celestine Pool, which was seething at a toasty 202 degrees, to rescue a friend’s dog, which had unknowingly just jumped in. Suffering third degree burns over 100% of his body, Kirwan died the next day in the hospital. As gruesome as this fate is, and as obvious a hazard that boiling hot springs would seem to pose, Whittlesey lists 19 deaths as having occurred in this manner. In the 1920s, when ranger supervision might have been a bit more lax, “[T]he monthly superintendent’s reports...are loaded with instances of people being burned in the face by looking down into the cone of Old Faithful Geyser.” Much to his credit, Whittlesey avoids callously renaming the geyser

Old Facefull, a temptation I seem powerless to resist.

*Beastly deaths*—On March 22, 1902, Dick Rock, 49, was displaying to others how tame the bison had become. One bison vehemently disagreed, charging and flipping Rock repeatedly into the air, trampling him into the ground, and goring him 29 times. Or, if you prefer, we have the case of William Tesinsky, 38, who was killed and partially eaten by a grizzly on or about October 4, 1986, while attempting to obtain a close-up photo of the bear. “Tesinsky’s entire neck was missing, probably the reason for his death....”

*Death in reverse*—On July 13, 1924, Mr. and Mrs. Earl Dunn somehow managed to back their Ford coupe over the edge of the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, first falling backwards in their car several hundred vertical feet before the car came to rest at the bottom of a ledge. “The two bodies continued downward, rolling and bouncing off numerous pinnacles and rock outcrops, and landing some eight hundred feet below...Mr. and Mrs. Dunn were mangled and broken and quite dead.”

Well, you get the picture. And I didn’t even include the water hemlock and hydrogen sulphide gas poisonings, the rock falls, snow falls, lightning, capsizings, Indian attacks, stagecoach accidents, or drownings due to hip waders filling with water (about nine cases).

*Unique* may be an overused word, but I found Yellowstone to be truly unique in my experience. I don’t think that I will ever again be able to sniff a hard-boiled egg, or witness a Coke and Mentos eruption, or side-step a bluish-green puddle of sizzling boiled-over radiator fluid, without thinking of Yellowstone National Park. And perhaps most importantly, I was not gored 29 times.

## The Passenger Pigeon: Contemporaneous Accounts from Three Ohio Ornithologists

*There is no shortage of testimony to the presence of vast numbers of passenger pigeons Ectopistes migratorius in Ohio during the nineteenth century. Even the dullest observer could not fail to notice them, and the literature abounds with contesting stories about how many were killed with a single shotgun blast or cast of a net, or for how many hours a vast flight of birds passed overhead in migration. Most county histories, even if they have little else to say about birds, devote a few sentences to such spectacles. Our first ornithologist J. P. Kirtland, in his 1838 catalogue of Ohio birds, mentions the "Passenger Pigeon Columba migratoria" without further comment, as if it were so widely known as to be unworthy of further comment. Here, however, we reprint accounts from three respected Ohio ornithologists of a later era who witnessed its swift passage into oblivion.*

*Then aged 21, John Maynard Wheaton published his "Catalogue of Birds of Ohio" (1861), at the time the most complete and accurate record of our bird life. Five years before his death in 1887, his "Report on the Birds of Ohio" appeared, a scrupulous and exhaustive work of nearly 450 pages, including detailed accounts of 298 species.*

*Among its interesting annotations are those for the passenger pigeon, for Wheaton had considerable personal experience with this remarkable bird. His lifetime encompassed the span during which it passed so quickly from superabundance into extinction. Dramatic descriptions of its abundance, habits, and distribution are easy to come by elsewhere, but Wheaton's, arising as they do from the heart of Ohio, have a special poignancy. —Ed.*

### From Report on the Birds of Ohio (1882: 441-2)

Formerly an extremely abundant summer resident and migrant, appearing in all seasons. Now, much less abundant and irregular. Not known to breed at present, though it probably does so. Until about 1855, Pigeons were extremely abundant in Central Ohio, having at and before this time a roost and breeding place near Kirkersville, Licking county. Then, for weeks at a time, they might be observed flying over this city [Columbus] or around its suburbs. In the morning soon after sunrise until 9 o'clock or after, their flight was westward, from the roost. In the afternoon, from four o'clock till sundown they were returning. During these periods, they were never out of sight, and often dozens of flocks were in view at once. These flocks were not of large size, but may be estimated to consist of from five hundred to fifty thousand birds, and it was their daily habit to leave their roost in search of food, in this manner. Whether those leaving in the morning invariably returned the same evening, or how far their journeys for food extended is not known. At such times they fed both in beech and oak woods and cornfields. When feeding upon acorns they were rather quietly dispersed among the branches of the trees, but in the country they flew nearer the ground, and following the plane of any inequalities. Vast numbers were shot, killed with poles on their roosts, or captured in nets. Dr. Kirtland states that near Circleville, in 1850, 1,285 were caught in a single net in one day.

And even this number was not exceptional if the price at which they were sold is any indication. Many thousands were offered for sale in the market of this city. Most of them were brought alive in coops, and the purchaser had the choice of carrying them home alive or having them killed on the spot. If he chose the latter, the seller by a dexterous movement fractured or dislocated the bird's neck between his teeth. The average price at this time was five or six cents a dozen.

Mr. Read states that in the spring of 1851, they appeared "in vast numbers in the fields feeding upon the dead grasshoppers, the remains of the countless hordes, which well night devoured 'every green thing' during the preceding [*sic*] summer and fall," a statement which will surprise ornithologists who have been accustomed to consider birds of this family as exclusively vegetarian.

On several occasions we have been favored with a general migration of these birds, when they have appeared, as described by Wilson, in "congregated millions." This was the case in 1854, when the light of the sun was perceptibly [*sic*] obscured by the immense, unbroken, and apparently limitless flock which for several hours passed over this city. In the fall of 1859 I witnessed a similar migration near Granville, Licking county, since which time the birds have been far less numerous. On this occasion I had an opportunity of observing a large flock while feeding. The flock, after a little circling by the foremost ranks, alighted upon the ground, presenting a front of over a quarter of a mile, with a depth of nearly a hundred yards. In a very few moments those in the rear, finding the ground already stripped of mast, arose above the tree tops and alighted in front of the advance column. This movement soon became continuous and uniform, birds from the rear flying to the front so rapidly that the whole presented the appearance of a rolling cylinder having a diameter of about fifty yards, its interior filled with flying leaves and grass. The noise was deafening and the sight confusing to the mind.

During the last ten years Pigeons have appeared irregularly, but usually in spring and fall, in small flocks. Sometimes these linger about swampy woodlands for several days. Possibly they may breed in detached parties, but no such instance is known to me.

The Wild Pigeon breeds in vast communities. The nest of sticks is places in a small tree; the eggs, two, pure white, measure 1.45 by 1.05.

\* \* \* \* \*

*William Leon Dawson's work on Ohio birds followed that of Wheaton by 21 years. Its more flamboyant prose accompanied by photographs and artwork, The Birds of Ohio (1903) was intended more for the public at large than specialists. Still, Dawson was as estimable an observer, and was later to write the first state monographs on the birds of California and Washington. Wheaton had noted the steep decline of the passenger pigeon in central Ohio, and by Dawson's time its numbers were declining fast even in remoter parts of its range. In his account of this bird, he quotes a passage describing human depredations during an annihilation near Petoskey, Michigan, which reported "at the lowest possible estimate, a grand total of 1,000,000,000 Pigeons sacrificed to Mammon during the nesting of 1878." Dawson's subsequent remarks follow. —Ed.*

**From *The Birds of Ohio* (1903: 426-7)**

Even if the last estimate were a hundred times too large (as I believe it to be) it is evident that such wholesale slaughter could not go on forever. The extraordinary flights suddenly ceased during the Eighties. Since that time, What has become of the Passenger Pigeon? has been the puzzling question. There are those who believe that great roosts are now maintained in the northwest, beyond the reach of communication. Others fancy they may have abandoned the migratory habit and taken to staying in Central and South America. Others still believe that they have rather abandoned the gregarious habit, and are to be found only in isolated pairs or small groups well distributed throughout the north. It is known that the birds do breed by single pairs, to some extent at least; but it is altogether probable that the Passenger Pigeons are almost gone—lost in the maw of human greed.

The following is the only recent published instance of the bird's occurrence in Ohio, altho others doubtless have been known locally to hunters: "On March 24, 1900, a solitary individual was shot by a small boy near Sargents, close to the boundary of Pike and Scioto counties, and mounted by the late wife of ex-sheriff C. Barnes of Pike County. This is the only authenticated record for twenty years."

\* \* \* \* \*

*Charles Dury (1847-1931) was a lifelong resident of Cincinnati and among its eminent naturalists, specializing in entomology and ornithology. A taxidermist and collector, president of the Cincinnati Society of Natural History, president of the Ohio Academy of Science, he was a mentor to several generations of scientists. His article on early explorations of Grand Lake St. Marys appeared in the Fall 2006 issue of the Ohio Cardinal. The following article appeared on pp. 52-56 of Vol. 21 (September 1910) of the Journal of the Cincinnati Society of Natural History.*

**The Passenger Pigeon *Ectopistes migratorius*, Linn.: A Reminiscence**

As late as the 60's and early 70's the Wild Pigeons came to southern Ohio in vast flocks. Their fall migrations were a wonderful and impressive sight. These great flights most frequently took place in October, although I have observed them to begin in late September, and continue at intervals into November. The usual time for the flight over Cincinnati and vicinity was in the afternoon and evening, and generally when the day was cloudy. The birds flew in long columns or strings, side by side. They first appeared in the northwest, flying towards and disappearing in the southeast. At times several of these flocks would be in sight at one time, and they were so long from end to end that they reached almost from horizon to horizon. During the day they flew very high, out of the range of shotguns. The present site of the Zoological Garden was then a series of ridges, covered with scattered beech trees, huge old ones with dead

tops. During the flight of the pigeons I have stood on one of these ridges and fired at pigeons as fast as I could reload my muzzle-loading gun, generally with scanty results, until dusk in the evening, when some of the birds would descend and alight on the dead branches of the tree tops, probably with the intention of resting for the night. At such times a few birds were secured, but the number killed in that way was trifling when compared to the wholesale slaughter and exterminating methods of the professional pigeon trappers.

The birds did not come over in the spring in any such numbers as they did in their autumn flight, and probably returned by a different route. At times in the spring, generally April, large flocks appeared in different patches of forest in this vicinity, where they remained for some days. It was in seasons when the beechnuts were abundant on the ground, and they fed on these nuts as long as any of them lasted. When the birds were shot at, they would fly from one end of the woods to the other, and many of them were killed.

For several years in succession a great flock came to the Blatchley woods in the north end of Avondale (now called Rose Hill), where I have bagged as many as I could carry. This was always in April and early May. By late May they were gone. Their method of feeding in the beech woods was very interesting and peculiar. I have seen a large flock fly down onto the ground to glean for beechnuts, those in the rear continually flying over those ahead, so that the mass looked at a distance as though they were rolling over the ground.

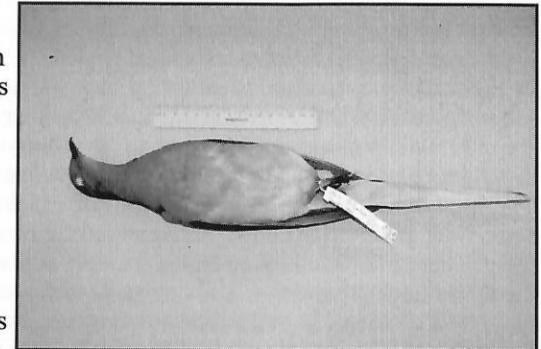
All mast, such as beechnuts and acorns, were picked up, none in sight escaped, and were swallowed whole. I have often been surprised at the large acorns these birds were able to swallow. The bill and throat were very elastic and could be widely stretched. I have shot birds that had the crop so distended with these nuts as to be nearly as large as an orange, and I have taken the nuts out, washed and eaten them.

When the birds were intent on feeding was a favorable time to slip up within shotgun range, which could be done by hiding behind a tree trunk, but if one bird took alarm and flew up, the entire flock was sure to follow.

Some of the birds nested in the great woods (growing at that time) west of Mill Creek, opposite to what is now Elmwood Place. I have shot squabs two-thirds grown that had been hatched there, as late as the year 1875. The pigeons that nested in these woods were not numerous and much scattered over the woods. They usually made their nests high up in the tallest trees.

As a food bird the old ones were not very good, being rather dry and tough, though well flavored, but the younger ones were excellent.

In this woods (then called Este's Woods) I have shot young pigeons



This male passenger pigeon was killed on 1 March 1875 in Columbus, and may very well have been one of those sold at the town market in Wheaton's day. Rule is in centimeters.

in September, nearly one-half grown, that had been feeding on "poke berries" (*Phytolacca decandra*) so that all the fluids of the body were stained with the bright-colored juice of these berries.

The size of the birds and the lateness of the season led me to the conclusion that they were of a second brood and that they were double brooded.

I was acquainted with a couple of men named Cone and Barr, who made a business of trapping wild pigeons. They followed the birds over the country, netting them for the market. To decoy them down to the nets, they used "stool pigeons." These were wild birds which they kept for the purposed in cages. They were made blind temporarily by stitching up their eyelids with a loop of thread. When a flock of birds were seen approaching, the blinded ones were thrown up in the air in front of the nets, and the birds, not being able to see, fluttered down, generally decoying and bringing the flock to the ground. The stool birds could not escape, as a string was attached to the leg. Other decoy birds were enclosed in coops placed so the approaching birds could see and hear them. These men assured me that if they got any at all, they generally secured the entire flock. This was in the spring, near the roosting and breeding grounds.

The captured birds were killed by having the neck pinched and dislocated. They were shipped all over the county in barrels if dead, or in crates if shipped alive. A shooting club that shot at the trap in the old Queen City Trotting Park, used them for targets. Whole crates were used in this way, and most of them were mangled with shot as they rose from the trap into the air.

The traps at that time were made of a long, slender piece of hickory for a spring, on the end of which was nailed a box with a hinged lid. When the spring was bent down the lid was held shut; when the spring was liberated, it flew up with great force, throwing the imprisoned bird into the air.

In this connection, I have noticed that the wild pigeon, when thrown into the air, quickly righted itself and made a bee line for the woods; but the domestic bird, when liberated under similar circumstances, made for the nearest building.

Those birds that were fortunate enough to escape at the trap, had to run the gauntlet of boys and others who shot them when they flew out of bounds, so that few escaped. The wild pigeon was a much more difficult bird to shoot on the wing than the domestic one.

I have seen the birds sell, when in danger of spoiling, as low as 25 cents per dozen in Cincinnati market, but 50 cents to \$1.00 per dozen was the usual price. All kinds of game was plenty and cheap in those days. Wild ducks and geese were so abundant at times that they were a drug on the market, and could be bought very cheaply.

Cone & Barr, the pigeon trappers, when in Cincinnati, made headquarters at J. B. Owing's game store, which at that time was on the south side of Fifth Street, opposite where the Government Building now stands.

When the Zoological Gardens opened, in 1875, they had a fine bunch of wild pigeons—about 22 birds. Gradually these have died, one by one, until now but two veritable patriarchs remain. At first a few were reared in the garden, but as the birds became older, though they made nests and laid a few eggs, none were hatched, as the eggs were no longer fertile. During the last twenty years I have heard rumors of the return of the wild pigeons, but whenever I have investigated these stories, have found them without foundation, generally

referring to another bird. A few scattered bunches may yet be alive. I hope it is so. About eight specimens are all I have preserved, for at that time of abundance I did not think it possible that such a vast myriad could have been exterminated during my lifetime. The eight that were saved are: three in my collection, three in the Cuvier Club's, and two at the Museum of the Cincinnati Society of Natural History. Color, form and habits considered, the Passenger Pigeon was the most remarkable of the pigeon tribe. The Audubon plate of this exquisite bird is exceedingly beautiful and lifelike. The unspeakable cruelty of the method by which these birds were so ruthlessly butchered, is a blot on the fair page of ornithological history in this country. The parent birds were trapped at their nesting places while brooding their young, leaving the helpless babies that had escaped the butchers to suffer a slow death by starvation.

Those who would read more in detail of how the wild pigeons were destroyed, are referred to a book by W. B. Mershon, entitled "The Passenger Pigeon" (Outing Publishing Co., 1907).

One foggy day in October, 1884, at 5 A.M., I looked out of my bedroom window, and as I looked six wild pigeons flew down and perched on the dead branches of a tall poplar tree that stood about one hundred feet away. As I gazed at them in delight, feeling as though old friends had come back, they quickly darted away in the fog, the last I ever saw of any of these birds in this vicinity.

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*Ten months after the publication of Dury's paper, the male of the pair of "venerable patriarchs" he describes above died at the Cincinnati Zoological Gardens. His mate, "Martha," followed him in 1914, the last known passenger pigeon in existence. Ohio was also the site of the last known wild passenger pigeon, shot by a boy in Pike County in 1900, as cited in the Dawson excerpt. Martha's remains now reside in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.; the Pike County bird, dubbed "Buttons" because the taxidermist used buttons instead of glass eyes, can be seen on display at the Ohio Historical Center in Columbus. Christopher Cokinos has a fine chapter on this species, containing a lot of original research, in his work on bird extinctions.*

*Dury was not alone in his inability to imagine that the numberless throngs of pigeons might ever vanish from the earth. Ohio had had another role to play in the life and death of these birds. In 1857 a bill was introduced in the Ohio Legislature to protect passenger pigeons. The bill did not pass, in part because a select committee of the Ohio Senate issued a report, saying in part "The passenger pigeon needs no protection. Wonderfully prolific, having the vast forests of the North as its breeding grounds, traveling hundreds of miles in search of food, it is here today and elsewhere tomorrow, and no ordinary destruction can lessen them, or be missed from the myriads that are yearly produced." —Ed.*

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Casey Tucker found this object in a Columbus antique shop, and contributed this photo. It appears to be a "stool pigeon," a replica such as Ohio hunters employed to lure passenger pigeons. Hunters also employed live birds, sewing their eyes shut, for the purpose.

## Mill Creek Wildlife Sanctuary: Transforming a Fish Farm into Habitat for Migrating Shorebirds

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Northeastern Ohio is not on a major shorebird migration route. These migrants, however, do pass through this area in considerable numbers in spring, and in late summer and fall. For these birds, stopover places for feeding and resting south of Lake Erie are scarce indeed, and as birders are well aware, even the southern Lake Erie shore is far from reliable as shorebird habitat. Water levels in many inland lakes and reservoirs in Ohio are controlled by various governmental and private interests, but none that I am aware of is purposely managed for the benefit of migrating shorebirds. Water levels are adjusted for flood control, boating, and water service to surrounding communities, but only occasionally and coincidentally do draw-downs occur during the important April/May and July-October shorebird migrations. An example of such a site is the portion of Berlin Reservoir north of Alliance that is bisected by Rt. 225. The Corps of Engineers opens the dam on its own variable schedule to allow water to run downstream into Lake Milton. This adjustment only occasionally coincides with the summer/fall shorebird migration; when it does, the water level drops so quickly that much of the exposed mudflats dry out almost immediately, thus rendering them of little value as feeding grounds. The author has paddled a kayak throughout this area during drawdown and has discovered that the exposed lake bottom is of little value anyway; it is primarily clay, where little vegetation occurs that creates the detrital mass necessary for a good population of the invertebrate prey that shorebirds require. As some local birders are aware, however, there have been years when rare circumstances have brought many shorebirds to this area – an indication that if you build it, they will come. Another example is the major construction project at the end of Norton Rd. in Trumbull County that began as a fish farm but was restructured, at great expense, into a waterfowl hunting area with little or no regard for the shorebirds that stopped there in the past. It was this lack of high-quality shorebird habitat that inspired an experiment to transform a 250-acre fish farm in southern Mahoning County into a wildlife sanctuary – with a primary emphasis on creating habitat for migrating shorebirds.

We expected to learn whether enlarging and restructuring the mudflats and increasing the populations, densities, and diversity of shorebird prey species would appreciably increase the numbers and variety of shorebird species here on the fringe of the main flyway, and extend the period of time they spend on the site. We also planned to determine whether the results of improvement would justify the cost in time, volunteer labor, and money.

This project first required several months of research, not only to

study methods for creating this kind of habitat, but also to assess risking the considerable effort and resources necessary for a relatively small project on behalf of migrant shorebirds. Research included literature searches as well as inquiries to many ornithological mailing lists, which resulted in invaluable responses from around the world, including one encouraging response from Hawaii that described the transformation of a fish farm into a significant shorebird stopover site. Although there is considerable literature on structuring saltwater habitat, sources of specific information on manmade freshwater shorebird habitat are scarce. In the sources I did find, there was considerable disagreement regarding methods for managing man-made shorebird habitat. This is understandable, as this remains a rather inexact science. Many opinions differ as to timing for flooding and drawing down impoundments. We have followed majority opinions and worked from our growing experience in our specific location. At least to some extent, therefore, we are exploring new territory, and our research culminated with a multiyear plan for the project. Below are the results of having followed this plan for approximately two years.

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The rich history of this strikingly beautiful parcel has been useful in our work. A hundred years ago, Mill Creek, which forms the entire eastern boundary

of the site, was channeled for several miles in order to run along a township line and to facilitate agriculture. The creek has since returned to some of its original bed, and we are still discovering places in the Sanctuary through which the creek originally flowed. When Drs. G. William Richter and William Baker, Mr. Cal Keppler, and other members of the locally historic Grant Cook Bird Club studied the birdlife on what is now Mill Creek Wildlife Sanctuary (MCWLS) during the 1940s and '50s, it was part of a floodplain bordering several miles of Mill Creek. The property was then owned by the Haus family, who had emigrated from Germany circa 1906 and later purchased part of the property from the Shank family who, among other things, had raised ponies on the land. The Haus family ran a dairy farm on the property and tried briefly to pasture cattle on the floodplain where the shorebird habitat is now, but soon discovered that repeated flooding and generally wet conditions made this impossible and thereafter kept the cattle up on the western slope. They also rented much of the land for pheasant, waterfowl, and probably rail hunting.



When William Calvin, the son of the dairy farmers, purchased the

land in the mid-fifties, he constructed dikes on the southeast portion to contain a pay fishing pond, augmenting this income with mink and muskrat trapping. In addition his family grew asparagus on top of the hill nearly fifty years. It was during this period that many of the breeding records on the site, such as large numbers of gallinules and rails, were reported by Richter and Baker. The next generation of Calvins, William, Richard and Timothy, maintained the pay fishing and hunting operation but gradually began stocking more fish, which they netted and sold. This occupation evolved into a full-scale fish-farming business, which led to the construction of several more impoundments. By the time Richard and Timothy Calvin, who owned the property at the time, signed a conservation easement in 2004, the business had been gradually scaled back to a point where the original ponds were little used for raising fish and had begun to revert to a natural wetland state. Hunting and fishing had also nearly ceased by this time. After several years of negotiation and fund raising under the direction of Susan Dicken, the environmentally-minded Director of Mill Creek Metroparks, the park system purchased the entire parcel on 23 August 2005. MCWLS now serves as a much-needed buffer zone against rampant development for Mill Creek which runs south from the sanctuary though the original 107-year-old Mill Creek Park.

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Although the MCWLS project is still in its early stages, the past two years have taught us that providing necessary invertebrate habitat by constantly



adjusting water levels is a long, ongoing experiment. We have already discovered, however, that it is possible to attract shorebirds in sufficient numbers to justify the initial labor and expense involved. While continuing the project, we are constantly aware of other goals compatible with creating mudflats for shorebirds, e.g. increasing the overall native – especially avian – biodiversity on this parcel. Nor have we, importantly, done harm

to any other native flora or fauna.

Despite our emphasis on shorebirds, the interdependency of so many resident species with the hydrology of the area was apparent. Although the approximately one hundred forty acres of floodplain is the primary focus here, MCWLS also provides one hundred fifteen additional acres of upland grassland, meadows, pine plantations, large hardwood lots (which we hope to connect with wildlife corridors), many native brush areas, and three relatively undisturbed wooded ravines through which run the creeks supplying much

of the water for the shorebird habitat. This creek hydrology is critical for flooding impoundments because it is doubtful that rainfall runoff would supply sufficient water for large-scale flooding – an extremely important consideration in the creation of any shorebird habitat. The upland also provides emergency water supplies from several smaller ponds, formerly used in the fish farming operation, from which water can be pumped into the shorebird impoundments during unusually dry periods. These upland systems are spread along on a long twenty-five degree slope and, being mostly self-sustaining, will require only a few years of persistent effort to remove relatively small stands of non-native buckthorn, Japanese knotweed, multiflora rose, and other less invasive plants. The property is bound on the north in part by a canal and in the upland by a creek running through meadows, and on the south by unpaved Calla Road. This road was abandoned by the county in the sixties, and is now gated and happily greatly limits access to the Sanctuary. A narrow woodlot running the length of the property at the highest elevation forms the western boundary, and Mill Creek forms the eastern boundary. All the property bordering the east side of the creek is a wetland owned for many years by a duck-hunting club, and at least for now provides an excellent buffer for MCWLS. These combined smaller ecosystems within the boundaries are the source of a bird list averaging well over one hundred species per year over the last decade, including conspicuous species such as nesting bald eagles, visiting American white pelicans, and sandhill cranes. The historical bird list for the property, begun in the 1940s or possibly the '30s, contains over 200 species in addition to the shorebirds, including many waders, waterfowl, raptors, rallids, larids, owls, many passerines, and others.

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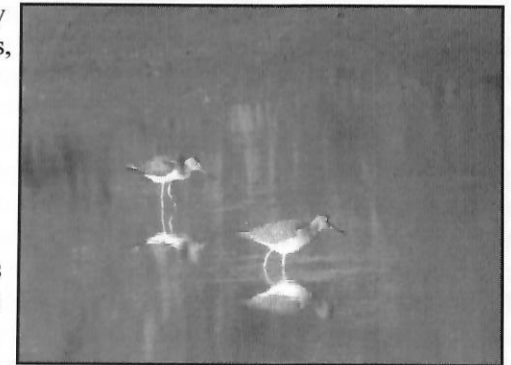
Although there is a history of birding on the property for over seventy years, I first began carefully tracking shorebird migrants on the property in 1995. Shorebirds appeared only when the fish farming operation required the drawdown of one of the ponds to a small pool of water from which the fish could easily be netted. The migrants included lesser yellowlegs, least sandpipers, dunlins, pectoral sandpipers, an occasional semipalmated plover, and possibly breeding spotted sandpipers. These species were observed only in single-digit numbers. The ponds were generally refilled shortly thereafter from adjacent ponds, or were allowed to refill from rain and natural drainage from the nearby slope, or even allowed to dry out completely. Accidental creation of mudflats also occurred when one of the dikes was breached due to damage from muskrat holes or from severe flooding and erosion after heavy rainfalls. Few of the serendipitous draw-downs, however, occurred during peak migration periods.

The appearance of the few shorebirds that did stop to rest and feed, however, induced us to consider creating more extensive feeding areas in a more timely fashion. Although Mill Creek Metroparks held a conservation easement at that time, the purchase of the property was not yet certain, so we were gambling at this point that our work would not be in vain. With permission from the

Calvins we began modestly and somewhat tentatively repairing and unclogging some of the existing PVC drains and inlets on 30% of the wetland, and repairing badly eroded dikes. One major leak, created by burrowing muskrats, was lowering the water level one foot per day from a large compound, and required the use of a bulldozer. The dozer was called in after a futile attempt to repair the dike with hand tools and a backhoe. Although expensive, this permanent repair proved well worth the cost. Stopping leaks, both into and out of the ponds, allowed us to fill to capacity the ponds that were seldom used for fish farming and to draw them down on schedule. As we hoped, the long-term water coverage flooded unwanted vegetation, eventually killing much of it (happily, as we discovered, including thick stands of buckthorn on low islands), and in the process created a detrital mass from dying vegetation that in turn created an ideal habitat for the proliferation of the invertebrates necessary for efficient shorebird feeding.

Flooding also encouraged native emergent plants beneficial to shorebirds and waterfowl. When these first experimental ponds were eventually drawn down, a census revealed a great diversity of the invertebrates needed to attract migrating shorebirds. Most sources describe the density required to attract shorebirds as 100 per square meter; our census revealed over 100 invertebrates per square *foot* – a very heartening turn of events. The most numerous among these included various life stages of midges, right- and left-hand snails, ramshorn snail, water strider, diving beetle, riffle beetle, spiders, earthworms, mosquitoes, and horsefly and dragonfly nymphs. Also present in lesser numbers were crayfish and terrestrial prey such as grasshoppers, flies, gnats, wasps, crickets, caterpillars, earthworms, ants, and mites.

Although much less important to shorebirds, very small fishes, frogs, and tadpoles were also abundant. Drowning out the higher, unwanted vegetation was also beneficial for the shorebirds in that they require a broad field of view in which they can feed



unimpeded and observe approaching predators. This point was vividly brought home as this writer watched, on more than one occasion, both short-eared owls and northern harriers taking advantage of “high” mounds (< three feet) and high vegetation that we had not yet removed, for concealment as they cruised low over the mudflats and, appearing very suddenly, snatched one of the few shorebirds that unwisely landed in such an area.

After the celebration of the Metroparks’ outright purchase of the property in 2005, we accelerated our efforts to create shorebird habitat as the fish-farming operation ceased completely. Immediate cessation of serious human disturbance, including the exclusion of three free-running pet dogs,



eliminated one major obstacle to creating a successful shorebird staging area. The experiments described above served as models for the management of the remaining 70% of the wetland. We knew that removal of the dikes would be counterproductive, allowing water from the wetland to return to the creek bed, which because of historical channeling is several feet lower in elevation than the base of the wetland. The creek, therefore, would not naturally reflood the wetland except after extremely heavy and extended rains. We continued to repair dikes using the backhoe, leveling the remnants of some interior dikes that had eroded over years through disuse, thus forming larger, shallower, and more open impoundments that were immediately more attractive to shorebirds.

We also continued core sampling for invertebrate density and found it more than sufficient to attract and hold shorebirds for sometimes over a week in almost all areas; the presence of the same individual shorebirds over time was determined, at least approximately, by daily twelve-hour observations during much of July and August of 2006. The shorebirds that moved in and out of the Sanctuary at night could not of course be tallied. Although many prey species mentioned above were available (i.e., found within 3 cm. of the surface), bloodworms, the larval form of the midge fly, are the most important. The significance of this chironomid species deserves some elaboration. Although diversity of invertebrates is important, it has been shown that the most significant prey for migrating shorebirds in the Midwest is bloodworms. Shorebirds feed heavily on these abundant, bright red larvae because they are the largest and easiest to catch. Several studies have shown that midge larvae are often – as is true in the MCWLS – the most abundant prey because of their adaptability to the great variations in wetland habitats, including extreme temperatures (even freezing), drying, and low oxygen, and thus have radiated into a great variety of niches in wetlands. The timing of the four life stages of these midges varies greatly with latitude; in the Midwest more than one generation may be present at the same time. Therefore there can be a nearly constant supply of the larval bloodworm stages throughout the shorebird migration months. Additionally, while the egg, pupa, and adult stages of chironomids can pass within days, midges spend most of their lives as larvae. These highly visible bright red bloodworms can grow as long as 24 mm and are among the earliest colonizers of new habitat, making them prime targets of shorebirds. To increase the supply of bloodworms and other prey species even further, our spring and summer drawdowns are done as slowly and steadily as possible in order to maintain constant and near perfect habitat for these prey species.

In addition to the problems with upland plants discussed above, the more common of the Ohio non-native, invasive wetland plants (purple loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria*, narrow-leaf cattail *Typha angustifolia*, and common reed *Phragmites australis*) covered approximately twenty percent of the wetland at the outset of our work. All three of these species had expanded rapidly during the years before the purchase and, unchecked, within a few more years would have taken over most of the wetland, rendering it useless as

shorebird habitat and providing little benefit to most other native wildlife.

Purple loosestrife was laboriously eliminated almost completely by cutting clumps near the base and carefully painting the stumps with undiluted glyphosate (marine-species-safe Rodeo). Hereafter, we need only occasionally pull re-emerging single plants. The narrow-leaf cattail and phragmites, on the other hand, were too widespread to eliminate manually. We simply sprayed the less invasive phragmites on windless days with the recommended solution of glyphosate, a surfactant adjuvant and blue dye, and during 2005 we managed to kill all except a few small patches that were easily eliminated in 2006. Although phragmites has appeared sparsely in an adjacent area in 2007, we expect to control it easily. In late summer of 2006, during an optimum period for elimination, along with deadheading, I began testing several spraying and large-scale mass and hand-wicking methods on marked plots of the cattail, the most widespread invasive, in order to determine the effectiveness of treatments in the summer of 2007. Finding the kill rate to be about 75%, we continued spraying and wicking appropriate patches with a stronger solution of glyphosate as manpower permitted in August of 2006 and, at this writing, we are awaiting the results of this effort. We will never completely eliminate the cattail, but the growth that survives treatment, along with abundant native burreed, knotweed/smartweed, and other species will continue to provide habitat for rails, coots, moorhens, bitterns, sparrows, marsh wrens and other species. Reluctant to use it at all, we took great care, of course, to use as little herbicide as possible and still do an effective job of eliminating highly invasive, non-native plants. These efforts have already opened up an additional thirty acres where water levels could be controlled to create constant wet earth and shallow water habitat for shorebirds and space for additional beneficial native plants to emerge.

In the coming year we will wait for periods between shorebird visits dry enough to operate a large backhoe and bulldozer to level the remains of old dikes that hold thick vegetation, thus creating even more habitat and eliminating remaining vegetation too tall for safe shorebird habitat. We also hope for conditions acceptable for shallow disking of both native and non-native overly high vegetation in order to add to the detrital mass beneficial for the proliferation of the macroinvertebrates discussed above. Also, it is becoming evident that larger more efficient drains and pumps will be needed on the larger impoundments to handle water during extremely wet or dry weather when the present equipment cannot keep pace. And, in order to monitor shorebirds and other species with as little intrusion as possible, I found that a long, straw-bale blind, built about chin high and supported by steel fence posts on a central dike intersection, works very well.

To reiterate, the results of our experiment have, at least as of the summer of 2007, been productive enough to justify continuing the time, effort and expense involved in expanding, improving, and stabilizing this wetland as a feeding and resting place for migrating shorebirds. The species occurring in the spring, summer, and fall of 2005 and 2006 and spring of 2007 included semipalmated plover, killdeer (breeding), black-bellied plover, American

golden plover, greater yellowlegs, lesser yellowlegs, solitary sandpiper, spotted sandpiper (breeding), marbled godwit, ruddy turnstone, red knot, sanderling, dunlin, pectoral sandpiper, white-rumped sandpiper, semipalmated sandpiper, least sandpiper, stilt sandpiper, long-billed dowitcher, short-billed dowitcher, American woodcock, common snipe, red-necked phalarope and Wilson's phalarope. Many of these species were present in the hundreds, most could be counted in dozens, and a few in smaller numbers, such as five marbled godwits, two red-necked phalaropes and one Wilson's phalarope. As near as I could determine, all appeared to remain on the site from at least twenty-four hours to ten days.

Other plans at the site include the introduction of many native grasses and forbs that we hope eventually will replace much of the other non-native plants not mentioned above, such as reed canary grass *Phalaris arundinacea* and goldenrod *Solidago* spp. that are expanding on the slopes. We have experimentally and selectively cut, plowed, burned, and disked test plots where a wide variety of grass and forb seeds were planted in fall of 2006. We hope this native planting will eventually bring in more shorebirds of drier habitats such as upland sandpiper and other meadow breeding species.

The Sanctuary will happily remain true to its name. No paving or construction will be done on the site, and visitations will be carefully controlled, although eventually the MCWLS should be invaluable as a nature education source for children because of its easy and convenient views of birds, including the nesting eagles and visiting American white pelicans and sandhill cranes mentioned earlier, a brief appearance of a swallow-tailed kite, and the many other forms of wildlife including mink, beaver and coyote that raise the awareness and interest of children, our future environmentalists.

Methods for expanding and improving the quality of existing wetlands or creating wetland for migrating shorebirds will vary greatly with location and conditions. It seems at this stage of this experiment, however, that larger mudflats and shallow water that contain a high diversity and density of prey species, and those in which one can control vegetation and water levels with reasonable ease and accuracy, will attract proportionately higher overall shorebird numbers and species diversity, thus possibly improving chances for the survival of these species, many of which are highly stressed during their breeding, wintering and migration periods. I believe that there are many locations in Ohio, such as abandoned fields and lakes and ponds where water levels can be controlled, which can be altered with relatively little effort and expense for the benefit of migrating shorebirds.



This bittern was seen, or missed, by many at the Shreve Migration Sensation this spring. Photo by Dave Lewis.