



CLEVELAND REGION

The Cleveland Bird Calendar

Published by

The Cleveland Museum of Natural History

and

The Kirtland Bird Club

THE CLEVELAND REGION

The Circle Has A Radius of 30 Miles Based on Cleveland Public Square

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Beaver Creek | 30 Lake Rockwell |
| 2 North Amherst | 31 White City |
| 3 Lorain | 32 Euclid Creek Reservation |
| 4 Black River | 33 Chagrin River |
| 5 Elyria | 34 Willoughby |
| 6 LaGrange | Waite Hill |
| 7 Avon-on-the-Lake | 35 Sherwin Pond |
| 8 Clague Park | 36 Gildersleeve |
| 9 Clifton Park | 37 North Chagrin Reservation |
| 10 Rocky River | 38 Gates Mills |
| 11 Cleveland Hopkins Airport | 39 South Chagrin Reservation |
| 12 Medina | 40 Aurora Lake |
| 13 Hinckley Reservation | 41 Aurora Sanctuary |
| 14 Edgewater Park | 42 Mantua |
| Perkins Beach | 43 Mentor Headlands |
| 15 Terminal Tower | 44 Mentor Marsh |
| 16 Cleveland Public Square | 45 Black Brook |
| Cuyahoga River | Headlands State Park |
| 17 Brecksville Reservation | 46 Fairport Harbor |
| 18 Akron | 47 Painesville |
| Cuyahoga Falls | 48 Grand River |
| 19 Akron Lakes | 49 Little Mountain |
| 20 Gordon. Park | Holden Arboretum |
| Illuminating Co. plant | 50 Corning Lake |
| 21 Doan Brook | |
| 22 Natural Science Museum | |
| Wade Park | |
| 23 Baldwin Reservoir | 51 Stebbin's Gulch |
| 24 Shaker Lakes | 52 Chardon |
| 25 Lake View Cemetery | 53 Burton |
| 26 Forest Hill Park | 54 Punderson Lake |
| 27 Bedford Reservation | 55 Fern Lake |
| 28 Hudson | 56 LaDue Reservoir |
| 29 Kent | 57 Spencer Wildlife Area |



CLEVELAND METROPOLITAN
PARK SYSTEM



PORTAGE ESCARPMENT
(800-foot Contour Line)

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THE WEATHER

September - The month was again cool and wet. Temperatures averaged out 2.8 degrees below normal. Only 11 days of above-normal temperatures passed, mostly in mid-month. Precipitation totaled 3.71 inches for an excess of 0.91 inches; it fell on 10 days well distributed during the month. Sunshine prevailed for 68 per cent of the time possible.

October - Precipitation was relatively light on most of the 13 days of well-distributed occurrence. These included snow on the 26th and 27th that accumulated to 2.54 inches for the month and left a deficit of 0.03 inches. Temperatures averaged a very cool 5.7 degrees below normal as the month passed with only five days of above-normal temperatures. Sunshine prevailed 46 per cent of the time possible.

November - The month was the coldest in 105 years of records as it averaged 7.9 degrees below normal. Only three days succeeded in averaging above-normal temperatures. Precipitation was light and well distributed, being measurable on 14 days and providing traces on another six days. the total of 0.80 inches was in deficit by 1.96 inches. Precipitation as snow was notable only on the 22nd.

COMMENT ON THE SEASON

Good but not outstanding describes the 1976 fall birding season in the Cleveland Region. The most distinctive feature was a tendency toward early migration, a fact perhaps attributable to the persistently cool weather. Though individual species showed the usual fluctuations, no group was either notably numerous nor disastrously scarce. In all, more species were up than down in the contributors' reports.

Some Waterfowl Arrive Early: Migration of Whistling Swans in late October and early November showed no evident deviation from the expected. Canada Goose reports, though, were apparently higher than in recent years. There were also more sightings of Snow Geese.

Dabbling ducks generally were reported more frequently than in the immediate past fall seasons. Mallards and American Wigeons were noticeably up in September. Pintails and Blue-winged Teals were more numerous and present over a longer season.

Scaups (no distinction between Greater and Lesser in Lake Erie flocks) arrived quite early and in considerable numbers, Ruddy Ducks, too, were conspicuously early and in large flocks. Hooded Merganser sightings were lower than in the preceding three years. The huge migration flights of Red-breasted Mergansers sometimes observed along the lakefront were not seen this season.

Kestrels Multiplying? Hawk reports were much as expected for most of the commoner species. The eight records of Sharp-shinned Hawks were more than usual, and there were substantially more sightings of Marsh Hawks, which showed up at Burke Lakefront Airport as well as other locations. American Kestrels, though, were seen enough more than in previous years to suggest a real population growth. Freeway construction and other habitat changes may be benefiting them.

Grass, Not Mud, Attracts Shorebirds. Shorebirds with an affinity for grasslands and wet meadows tended to be more persistent during the season, while those with a preference for mudflats and sandy shores were generally at or below the expected. Weather conditions and availability of habitats, both to birds and birders, probably explain this situation.

Killdeers were reported in twice the numbers of the previous five years. American Golden Plovers were more numerous, and Black-bellied Plovers lingered for a longer time at Burke Lakefront Airport and other locations. Pectoral Sandpipers showed an increase, In contrast, there were

fewer Lesser Yellowlegs. Semipalmated Sandpiper and Sanderling reports were normal.

Gulls, Terns, Early. All three common, fall and winter resident gulls were plentiful along the lakefront. Ring-billed Gulls appeared to arrive in force somewhat early. Allowing for inconsistencies in reporting from year to year, it seemed that Bonaparte's Gulls were even more numerous than usual. Common Tern sightings slacked off rather early in September. Caspian Terns made a good showing but had no noticeable inclination to linger.

More Mourning Doves Counted. Legalized shooting still has had no visible effect on the Mourning Dove population in portions of the region covered by contributors. Reports again showed an increase over previous autumns. Many doves are attracted to residence feeding stations.

Nighthawk Flight Compressed. Migration of Common Nighthawks was unusually concentrated into the first nine days of September, in sharp contrast to the prolonged passage in 1975. Heaviest action was observed on the evening of September 7. Between 5:30 and 6:15 p.m. one contributor counted 732 birds headed generally south up the Cuyahoga valley in north-central Akron (Fricker). From 6:30 to 8:30 an estimated 500 were seen heading west-southwest over Willoughby (Huey). Another 31 were reported from Lorain County (Dolbear).

Chimney Swifts were present in normal numbers and well distributed through the normal period from the end of August to early October. No unusual concentrations were reported.

No Increase in Woodpeckers Reported. Woodpeckers generally held constant or showed slight declines in the fall records. The possible exceptions were the Pileated, which was up but not significantly in the tabulations, and the Downy, which is so common as to make numerical comparisons uncertain. Reports of Red-headed Woodpeckers were somewhat lower in September. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers had a curtailed migration season here. Hairy Woodpeckers were recorded less than usual, perhaps because of deviations in reporting.

Nuthatches Numerous; Wrens Fluctuating. Red-breasted Nuthatches were present in good numbers, particularly during September. Brown Creepers, though, were seen less often and a bit earlier than usual.

House Wren reports showed a slight increase, while those of Winter Wrens were about average. Carolina Wrens were back to the level of 1973, somewhat lower than in the two intervening years.

Most Mimids, Thrushes Doing Well. Fall records of Gray Cat-

birds were at the normal level. Brown Thrashers showed a modest increase over the previous years.

American Robins were about as abundant as usual. Wood and Swainson's Thrushes were reported in greater numbers than in the past five years, both species conforming to the usual migration time schedule. Hermit Thrushes also had a good season. Gray-checked Thrushes held to the level of the two good years preceding. Only the Eastern Bluebird differed from the generally favorable thrush picture; reports of it were very low.

Cedar Waxwings Conspicuous in September. Cedar Waxwings, unpredictable as ever, were unusually numerous during the first three weeks of September. After that they were seen only irregularly, with most November sightings being at the Holden Arboretum.

Second High Season for Red-eyed Vireos. Fall migration of Red-eyed Vireos was exceptionally good for the second year in a row. Reports of Philadelphia Vireos were also above normal. Other vireos were not above the expected.

Warbler Migration Generally Good. Despite few late travelers, the warbler migration was on the whole quite good; no notable peaks were discerned but a steady flow through most of September. Of all the common species only the Black-throated Green was markedly low in numbers.

Tallies of Black and White Warblers were higher than in any of the five preceding autumns. Tennessee Warblers, well distributed through September, were as numerous as in the very good 1975 flight. Yellow-rumped Warbler migration was heavy and extended. Reports of Bay-breasted Warblers were greater than in 1975, which exceeded any of the four preceding years. Blackpolls, which had been a trifle lower the past two years, were up to the very good 1973 level. The 62 sightings of Northern Waterthrushes were more than double the best of the preceding five fall seasons. American Redstarts were well above any recent year.

Finches More Up Than Down. Populations of finches and sparrows showed more gains than losses, but the general pattern could best be described as irregular. Reports of Purple Finches were about double the level of the previous four years. Chipping Sparrows appeared to enjoy a real boom and Dark-eyed Junco records were the highest since 1971. Field Sparrows were far more numerous in the reports than in any recent year, and Fox Sparrows were up substantially. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and White-throated Sparrows also exceeded predictions.

On the other hand, Tree Sparrows were only at the Level

of 1975, below the years preceding. Song Sparrows were down somewhat, especially in November. Rufous-sided Towhees did gain but were still not up to the numbers of a few years back. Other common, fringillids followed a basically normal migration pattern.

A single flock of about 50 birds in Kirtland Hills, October 23 (Bole), and two isolated individuals were the only Pine Siskins reported. No other northern finches were mentioned by the contributors.

Yearly summary. In the BIRD CALENDAR year now concluded (December 1, 1975, to November 30, 1976) a total of 250 species were recorded, fewer than in the three previous years despite addition of three species to the Cleveland Region list. The reduced total could be attributed to a smaller number of accidentals, rather than to any notable absentees among the regular migrants. In addition to the 250 species enumerated, the hybrid Brewster's and Lawrence's Warblers were both observed.

Species never previously recorded in the Cleveland Region were the Louisiana Heron, Ivory Gull, and Clay-colored Sparrow.

NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

Double-crested Cormorant - Two groups of three specimens each flew easterly over Lake Erie at Lorain on October 5 (Dolbear). Single birds were also seen at Lorain, September 22 (Dolbear), and White City, October 11 (Hannikman).

Great Egret - Three birds were observed repeatedly in the Becker Pond area of Mentor Marsh during September; four were present on the 12th (Hammond). Latest report was of a single specimen on October 6 (Newhous).

Glossy Ibis - In bright sunlight on the morning of September 25 one was sighted as it stood in the edge of Becker Pond at Mentor Marsh; when disturbed, it flew off to the westward (Hammond).

Snow Goose - A vee of at least 47 flew over Mentor Marsh, headed west, on October 23. Two were white-phase, and the rest, blue; about half of the latter were in immature plumage (Rickard). Reports were also received of several individuals.

White-winged Scoter - First report of these winter visitors was of four at Gordon Park on the uncommonly early date of October 23 (Klamm).

Surf Scoter - Three females or immatures were studied for

about 15 minutes as they rested, dived, and preened in the impoundment at Municipal Light Plant, October 23 (Hoffman). Two were at Lakewood on November 7 (Klamm).

Black Scoter - On November 13 one was observed off Perkins Beach (Klamm).

Whimbrel - At Burke Lakefront Airport at least one specimen was seen by several observers from September 11 to October 2; two were there on September 25 (Klamm). One was also feeding in the Medina school complex, September 6 (Hocevar). Sightings of this accidental migrant have increased in the past few years.

American Avocet - Two in winter plumage were on the mudflat at White City in late afternoon on September 4 (several contributors). All confirmed sightings in the Cleveland Region of this accidental have been at White City; it was first recorded there in 1964.

Red Phalarope - At the East 55th Street marina one retaining a faint tinge of red on the sides of the neck was photographed at a distance of 30 feet, as it fed along the shore on October 19 (Hoffman). Most previous records of this species here have been from November on into the winter.

Northern Phalarope - Individuals were seen at three widely separated locations during the season; all were in winter plumage. On September 8 one was at Spencer Wildlife Area (Ward, et al.). Another was at White City on September 22 (Hannikman, et al.). The third was near the Fairport Harbor Coast Guard Station, October, 31 (Hammond).

Black-legged Kittiwake - An immature was studied at some length in the boat basin near East 72nd Street on November 13 and 27 (Hocevar). Presumably the same specimen was at the East 55th street marina on November 21 (LePage).

Eastern Kingbird - One perched on a utility wire on Northfield Road near Harvard on October 24 marked a new latest date of fall occurrence for the species (Knight).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher - In Waite Hill one was netted and banded on October 18, a new latest fall date (Flanigan).

Tree Swallow - Near Oberlin one was seen on the markedly late date of November 17 (Hlebcar).

Northern Shrike - Multiple sightings at one location and individual reports from at least three others suggested a modest incursion of this rare winter visitor. One first reported at the old Brooklyn airport on October 30 (Emil Bacik, fide Hoffman) was seen there repeatedly until Novem-

ber 20 or later (Hoffman, LePage). Also on October 30 one was observed at Mentor Marsh (Rickard). One was perched over Bates Pond, near the Rocky River waste water treatment plant on November 14 (Stasko). Another appeared interested in a flock of Cedar Waxwings at the Holden Arboretum on November 20 (Hammond). One or two reports a year is a more typical pattern for this species.

White-eyed Vireo - Two specimens were both heard and seen along the bird trail at Lake Isaac on September 6 (Stasko). Another was banded and photographed in Waite Hill, September 17 (Flanigan). Rare in spring migration, this species is observed even less frequently here in fall.

Golden-winged Warbler - A female at Donald Gray Gardens on September 21 was a new latest fall date for the species (Besser, Hocevar). In Kuhlman Woods, near East 140th Street, a well-marked male was observed on September 11 (Hannikman). These are the first September records in the Cleveland Region since 1969.

Lawrence's Warbler - At Donald Gray Gardens one was studied as it perched low in a bush on September 11 (LePage), the first recorded fall sighting of this very rare hybrid.

Nashville Warbler - At Horseshoe Lake three were watched for several minutes as they moved about at moderate levels on the unusually late date of November 13 (LePage). Another straggler was in Willoughby on November 9 (Huey).

Northern Parula - An adult male was studied at close range as it fed among low vegetation in the Tiedeman Road Metro park, November 20; a new latest fall date (Hoffman).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak - One was seen in Lorain on the unseasonably late date of November 26 (Hlebcar).

Le Conte's Sparrow - On the East 55th Street marina landfill one was photographed as it fed among weeds and bushes (Hoffman, Klamm). This is only the sixth record in CBC files and the second in 1976 (see CBC 72:2).

Sharp-tailed Sparrow - At least three individuals were identified along the lakefront during the fall. One was located at Donald Gray Gardens, September 25 (Hocevar et al.) and later photographed on 16 mm movie film (Klamm). Another adult described as "a brighter orange" was seen at Gordon Park also on September 25 (Hoffman). An immature was found at Donald Gray Gardens on October 4 (Hocevar).

Lapland Longspur - Two were on the landfill at the East 55th Street marina, October 10 (Hoffman). A similar pair were on the Gordon Park landfill, October 31 (Hannikman, LePage).

FIELD NOTES

ANALYSIS OF SOME NORTHEASTERN OHIO OWL PELLETS. Barn Owls have all but disappeared from northeastern Ohio. Along with other predatory birds at the top of the food chain, they have suffered from DDT in the environment. The last Barn Owl pellets I have been able to obtain are reported here.

Michael Balough collected 15 pellets from near Mesopotamia in Trumbull County in November of 1971. Included in them were the remnants of the following prey: 32 Meadow Mice, 3 Short-tailed Shrews, 3 Little Harvest Mice, 2 Norway Rats, 2 Star-nosed Moles, and 1 Canada Shrew.

On July 1, 1972, I collected 25 Barn Owl pellets from a barn being torn down in Norton Road in northern Summit County. Included were the following prey: 34 Meadow Mice, 2 Short-tailed Shrews, 1 Little Harvest Mouse, and 1 small passerine bird.

An injured Barred Owl found on Graham Road, west of Kent on January 27, 1976, was kept in captivity while recuperating. A disgorged pellet contained the remains of one Short-tailed Shrew. - RALPH W. DEXTER

NIGHTHAWKS MIGRATE UP CUYAHOGA VALLEY. Migrating Common Nighthawks in the early evening of September 7 were spectacular. I was at Valleyview Golf Course on the bank of the Cuyahoga River in the north-central part of Akron, just north of where the Cuyahoga and Little Cuyahoga merge.

Between 5:15 and 5:30 perhaps a dozen nighthawks were seen. I wasn't paying much attention, and nothing seemed unusual. Suddenly, starting at 5:30, the air seemed filled with nighthawks, and they continued to pass at a rather steady rate for the next 45 minutes. All birds were flying in a generally southerly direction up the valley, and almost without exception they were very low, averaging 25 to 30 feet above the ground.

Shortly after 6:00 the rate of passage started to diminish, and by 6:15 only an occasional bird was being seen. During the brief three-quarters of an hour I counted 732 Common Nighthawks. Considering the layout and extent of the golf course, I am sure at least an equal number and probably more passed through the area unseen. - FRED E. FRICKER

NORTHERN SHRIKE MOUSES AT BROOKLYN AIRPORT. The adult Northern Shrike at the old Brooklyn airport was reported to us by Emil Bacik on October 30. However, we were unable to identify it satisfactorily until November 14, when we had it in good light and were able to observe it for some time with a telescope.

Its typical behavior is to perch in the tops of small saplings in the field, from which vantage it watches all around the area, turning and flicking its tail. It then glides down into the grass, sometimes hovering, and sails back to a perch. We never observed it capture anything. But this behavior would seem to indicate that it was hunting for mice, as the same procedure was successfully used by an American Kestrel to secure a mouse in this same area on November 16. Other prey are available, particularly a large flock of American Goldfinches which avoid it rigorously.

On the warm, sunny morning of November 16 the bird was the tamest of any occasion and sang from its perches or called and scolded. This continued for 30 minutes, while we watched. The calls were loud and raucous, sometimes not unlike a bird attacked by a cat. The song was gurgling and slightly reminiscent of a Mockingbird. The entire repertoire was amazingly chat-like. - JEAN HOFFMAN

A DIVERSE MIGRATION OF PASSERINES. A heavy fog prevailed until at least 10:00 a.m. on October 3. The following day when I visited several of the tall buildings in downtown Cleveland where migrating birds often come to an untimely end, I found these specimens: one each of Brown Creeper, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Lincoln's Sparrow, and Swamp Sparrow. All had seemingly been killed on the 3rd, judging from the desiccated state of their eyes.

Although the number was small, the diversity of species would seem to indicate that there was a sizable migration on October 3. Apparently that movement continued on the 4th, since on that day at noon many White-throated Sparrows were feeding in the plantings at the New Federal Building and a fair number of Golden-crowned Kinglets were flitting about in the trees at Erieview Plaza. -DONALD L. NEWMAN

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AN INVITATION: The Kirtland Bird Club meets at 7:45 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month except July and August in The Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Wade Oval, University Circle. Visitors are always welcome.

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Inquiries and correspondence regarding subscriptions to THE CLEVELAND BIRD CADENDAR should be addressed to The Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Wade Oval, University Circle, Cleveland, Ohio 44106.