

T H E C L E V E L A N D B I R D C A L E N D A R

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CLEVELAND BIRD CALENDAR

Fall Migration Number

Edited by Arthur B. Williams

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The Big Snowstorm of November 24-25 served to make us conscious of elemental needs - like food, shelter and the muscle-power of the individual on which self-reliance is ultimately based. It gave us an increased understanding of the perils which all wildlife faces as a matter of course - though often involving the grim question of survival or death.

Various reports emphasized the ability of the birds to find the seeds of hemlocks, berries of dogwood, wygelia, barberry, high-bush cranberry, frozen apples and other fruits. Also apparent was the presence of birds in unexpected and unusual places, particularly about human habitations, where they seemed hopeful of finding help. Then there were the reports of dead and injured birds picked up from the snow - a Kingfisher on East Boulevard; a Virginia Rail in Cleveland Heights; Mourning Doves, stiff and frozen - one dove with a broken leg; a frozen Junco. Even rabbits and cats were reported trapped under the icy crust of the snow.

At this date it is too early to measure the effect of the storm on our bird population - we need the December records. All readers of the BIRD CALENDAR are asked to send to the Editor whatever observations they may have of changes in numbers of birds. Particularly, how did Bobwhite fare?

Contributors to this issue of the CALENDAR are:

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NEW SUBSCRIPTION RATE

By action of the Kirtland Bird Club at its meeting January 3, 1951, the annual subscription price of the BIRD CALENDAR was set at \$1.00, beginning with Volume 47, No. 1.

SUMMARY OF WEATHER CONDITIONS

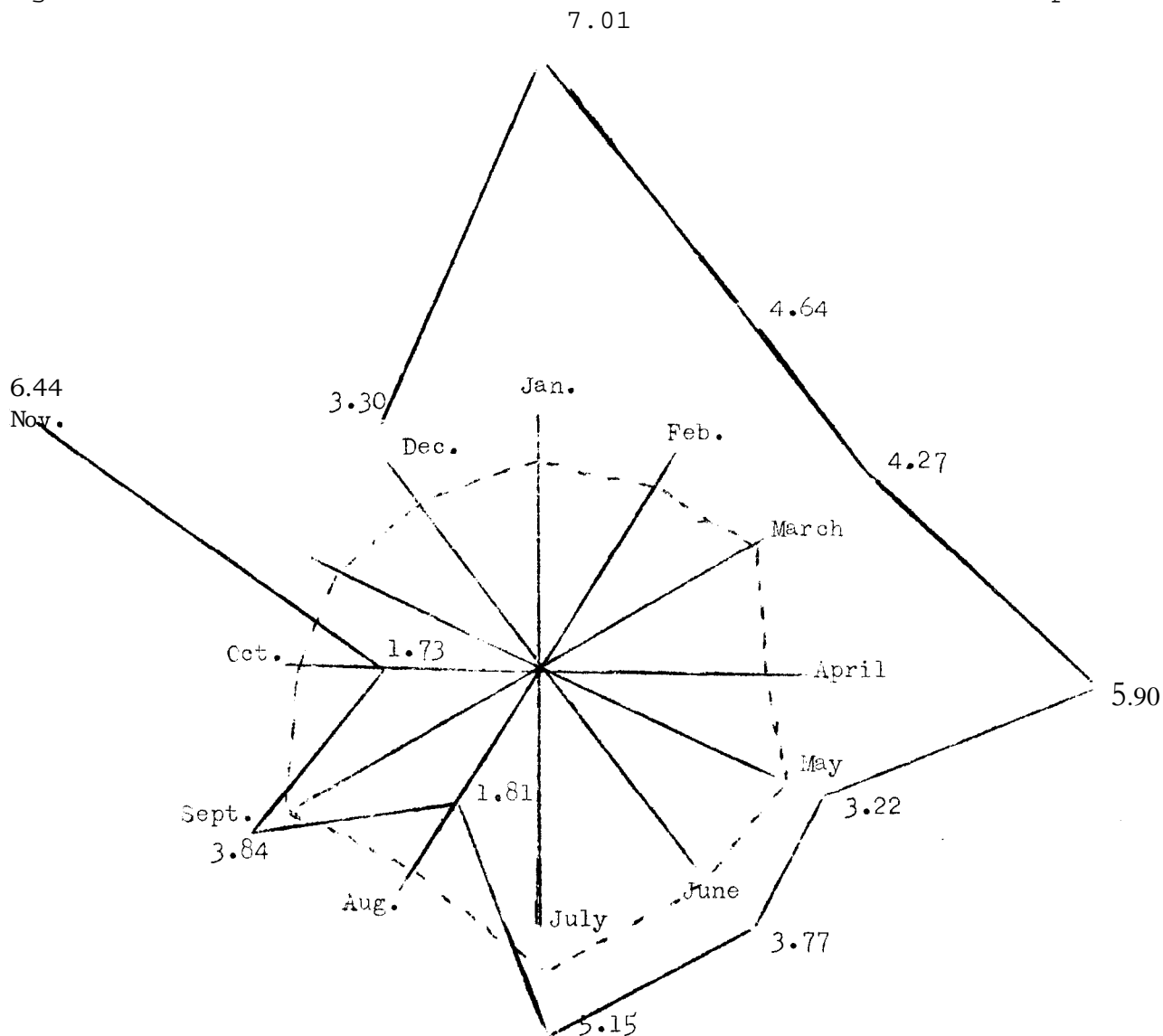
September - Temperature and precipitation near normal. On the afternoon of the 24th an unusually dense layer of smoke, said to have come from forest fires in Canada, covered the city, producing twilight conditions for about two hours.

October - Temperatures averaged 11.6 degrees above normal during last half of the month. On the 17th, 18th and 31st the temperatures were 82°, 84° and 82° respectively. A record of 79° on the 30th broke the record for that day.

November - Temperatures showed wide divergence, with 82° on the 1st and 7° on the 24th. A heavy snowstorm on the 24th and 25th was the greatest in 37 years. On the night of the 24th a thick, hard crust developed on the snow surface. Traffic was at a standstill on the 25th and 26th. Official record of snowfall 20.9 inches, but many drifts were waist deep.

Precipitation for the last 12 months has been greater than for any calendar year since 1878.

In the chart below each spoke of the wheel, from center to circumference, represents 3 inches of water. The dotted line connects the points which show "normal" or average precipitation for each month. The solid line connects points showing the actual precipitation for the months of 1949-50 indicated. Figures are records of U. S. Weather Bureau located at the Cleveland Airport.



COMMENT ON THE RECORD

Common species not noted below were apparently present in usual numbers.

The first migrating Loon was reported November 16 at Avon, by Akers. This constitutes the only loon record for the period.

Horned Grebes seemed to be unusually abundant, particularly along the Lake Erie shore in the vicinity of Gordon Park.

American Egrets were reported September 2(9), 10(1), 16(1), 17(6).

A flock of 34 Snow Geese, seen flying south along the Cuyahoga Valley near Brecksville, November 16, was reported by Piskac.

Mallards and Black Ducks were present in considerable numbers along the lake shore until November 23. Significantly, most of our duck records stop at this point - the day before the big storm.

Bobwhites were reported in small numbers only. An effort will be made to determine, if possible, the effect of the storm of November 24-25 on their numbers.

An unusually late record for the Virginia Rail (though not the latest) was established when a live, but injured bird of this species was found in the snow November 28 in Cleveland Heights. The bird later died and was brought to the Museum of Natural History.

Shorebird migration was spotty within the region. We need to turn to the Mosquito Creek record (see p. 5) to get the picture of these birds in transit. A Northern Phalarope was seen September 2 at Richmond Beach by King, and 18 of these birds on September 17, and 3 September 24 at Fairport by Booth.

Mourning Doves seemed to be particularly abundant in November, being reported in small flocks. One flock estimated at 500 birds was seen for several days in Euclid.

A Snowy Owl was reported seen October 29 at Fairport by King and Walters, and another at Mosquito Creek October 25 by Hamann and 27 by Akers.

Only one report of Red-breasted Nuthatches was received - October 22(2) seen by Newman at North Chagrin. This seems to be an "off" year for this species.

A Bewick's Wren, seen at North Akron September 22, was reported by Lieftinck.

A Catbird seen in Sand Run Metropolitan park, Akron, November 12 by Lieftinck, was in the same location occupied by a catbird during November, December, January last winter.

Robins seemed unusually numerous, being reported in flocks of 100 to 700 as late as November 6.

A new late date for the Orange-crowned Warbler was established by Lieftinck who reported one seen November 111 "in a willow tree near an open pond", North Akron. Our previous latest fall date for this species was October 13, 1945.

Evening Grosbeaks were reported October 29(5), by King at Fairport; and November 29(25) by Roth near Pennsylvania Ore Docks.

A new late record for the Vesper Sparrow was made by Knight, who reported 2 seen November 26. Our previous latest fall date for this species was November 12, 1938.

Only 4 records for the White-crowned Sparrow were received. September 27 (1), October 13(1), October 18(1), October 28(11).

RECORDS FROM NEIGHBORING LOCALITIES

Locust Point (near Port Clinton)

October 29 - Canada Goose 28, Mallard 160, Black Duck 15, Baldpate 70, Pintail 35, Green-winged Teal 1, Shoveler 2, Coot 100 - M. Owen Davies.

Darrow Road (near Huron)

September 23 - American Egret 5, Mallard 5, Black Duck 16, Baldpate 6, Pintail 2, Blue-winged Teal 75, Wood Duck 3, Lesser Scaup 1, Spotted Sandpiper 1, Solitary Sandpiper 1, Sanderling 4 - M. Owen Davies.

Ottawa - Two White Pelicans were reported seen during most of October (until October 28) at Ottawa Shooting Club (Muddy Creek) by F. W. Krebs.

SANDUSKY REGION	September	November	
	4	12	19
Horned Grebe		25	5
White Pelican	1		
American Egret	5		
Blue Goose		1	1
Canada Goose		24	
Mallard		200	8
Black Duck		35	50
Gadwall		20	25
Baldpate		40	500
Pintail	6	300	1500
Green-winged Teal		1	4
Blue-winged Teal			1
Shoveler		30	50
Wood Duck	5		
Redhead		30	3
Canvasback		65	50
Lesser Scaup			12
Goldeneye			5
Bufflehead		4	
Ruddy Duck		30	
Hooded Merganser		12	10
Red-breasted Merganser			8
Coot	2	25	500
Semipalmated Plover	3		
Knot	6		
Least Sandpiper	2		
Semipalmated Sandpiper	10		
Sanderling	5		
OBSERVERS - Robert McNeese, Adela Gaede, R. W. Hill			

MOSQUITO CREEK	September							October			
	3	4	7	10	15	16	24	1	7	25	27
Double-crested Cormorant					7						
American Egret	3		2								
Canada Goose				1				1	36	11	
Mallard			1	6				6	1		
Black Duck	3		2	3				3	1		
Gadwall									1		
Green-winged Teal					4						
Blue-winged Teal	6		35	2	2		4	2	12		
Duck Hawk	1										
Pigeon Hawk									1		
Ruddy Turnstone							1				
Semipalmated Plover	4		25		25		6	2	6	3	
Golden Plover			8			16	9	6			
Black-bellied Plover	8		2		10		10	3	6		2
Greater Yellowlegs	2						1	3	2	1	
Lesser Yellowlegs	20		2		1				1		
Knot		2		2							
White-rumped Sandpiper							2				
Pectoral Sandpiper	30		10		4		25	50	50	30	12
Baird's Sandpiper					5			2			
Least Sandpiper	3		4				1			2	1
Red-backed Sandpiper									30	90	100
Stilt Sandpiper			1		10				1		
Semipalmated Sandpiper	10		25		50		1	2	6	1	6
Western Sandpiper			1								
Sanderling	8		5		10		6	20	4		1
Northern Phalarope			1	1							
Snowy Owl										1	1
American Pipit							6	6		100	
OBSERVERS: Akers, Carrothers, Hamann, Hill, King, Lieftinck. Perner											

Pymatuning

September 23 - American Avocet (1), Stilt Sandpiper (7),
Northern Phalarope (3).

NOTE: The Avocet was present September 22, 23
and 24. The head and neck retained some of
the pinkish color of the breeding plumage.
It was seen both feeding and on the
wing. It fed in the manner peculiar to
the species, swinging its upturned bill
back and forth through
the water - J. E. Lieftinck.

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LATE NESTING RECORDS

- Bobwhite - September 4, Solon, female with 18 downy young apparently 2 to 3 days old - Walter Smith.
- September 28, North Akron, covey of 22, including 8 young barely able to fly; November 5, same covey now all uniform size - J. E. Lieftinck.
- Cedar Waxwing - September 11, Aurora Township, nest in thorn 11 feet up, adult brooding 3 young apparently 3 to 4 days old - Carl F. Hamann.
- August 25, Middleton Road, north of Hudson, nest 5 feet up in small oak, 4 young in nest - Ralph W. Dexter.
- Cardinal - September 2_s, East Cleveland, 3 young in nest - Vera Carrothers.
- September 4, Wickliffe, 2 young in nest_s just developing primaries - C. T. Downer.
- Goldfinch - September 18, Aurora Sanctuary, nest in thorn 3½ feet up, female brooding young - Carl F. Hamann.

FIELD NOTES

Super-Service Station for Birds in Distress - The last week of November 1950 will long be remembered as the date of the biggest snowstorm in Cleveland's recent history. It was a time when many bird feeding stations, run by people interested in bird life, were doing their best to give aid to hungry avian visitors. The well equipped station operated by Mr. and Mrs. E. F. Lansinger on Oakhill Road, East Cleveland, reported the following impressive list of patrons during the last 5 days of November. Most of these were present daily.

Bobwhite 14, Mourning Dove 6, Flicker 1, Hairy Woodpecker 2, Downy Woodpecker 3, Blue Jay 8, Chickadee 2, Tufted Titmouse 2, White-breasted Nuthatch 2, Robin 1, Starling 7, English Sparrow 300, Cowbird 7, Cardinal 25, Junco 15, Tree Sparrow 3, White-throated Sparrow 12, Fox Sparrow 1, Lincoln Sparrow 1, Song Sparrow 6.

Chimney Swifts Going to Bed - Near the High School building in Willoughby, on the evening of October 5, 1950, our attention was attracted by a large number of Chimney Swifts settling for the night in the chimney of the school building. The swifts circled about gradually getting lower and lower and nearer the chimney - four or five dropping in at a time. If by chance one did not make it the first time it would rise and fly about and try again. Frank N. Shankland estimated that there were between 500 and 600 swifts in this flock. He said they had been there a week. Adela Gaede

Unusual Behaviour of Red-shouldered Hawks - The golf practice range near my home is usually dotted with golfballs. On the afternoon of September 23, 1950, I saw two adult Red-shouldered Hawks walking in the grass. They would walk up to a golfball, cover it with one claw, lift it an inch or so, and drop it. They did the same with several balls in succession, perhaps thinking they were eggs. Finally, noticing my approach, they flew away. John E. Lieftinck

Bronzed Grackles Bathing Episode - Walking through Sand Run Metropolitan Park

around noon on September 28, 1950, I came upon a huge concentration of noisy grackles. Every tree on top of the ridge seemed full of them. Suddenly they started to pour down the hillside through the underbrush and streamed across the road to shallow sand Run Creek at the bottom of the valley. When I reached the creek I found it literally filled with bathing grackles, and many more were on the ground and in the bushes awaiting their turn to bathe. After about twenty minutes the entire flock moved up the hill again through the undergrowth just as they came. I estimate the total flock at somewhere between 1500 and 2000 birds. It is interesting to note that I had not seen a single grackle in north Akron in the previous ten days, and that I almost never see them at Sand Run. John E. Lieftinck.

Migration of Canada Geese - On the morning of October 14, 1950, Mr. Clark Bole tells the Editor, an enormous flock of Canada Geese passed flying south over his place on Mitchells Mill Road near the East Branch of the Chagrin River. The birds were not in "V" formation. Their ranks extended over the whole part of the sky visible from his house. They were flying high, yet the sound of their honking was audible even after they had passed out of sight. The flock was so large it was impossible to count the birds, but Mr. Bole is sure that 2500 to 3000 is a conservative estimate.

Cormorants Nesting on Lake Erie Island - In view of the fact that the Double-crested Cormorant is now more commonly seen on Lake Erie than was the case a few years ago, it is of interest to note a recent report of its breeding on Little Chicken Island. This is a small, low island, barren of vegetation, at the western end of Lake Erie. On July 9, 1950 a group of people from Franz Theodore Stone Laboratory found 20 cormorant's nests on the island; counted 24 adults and 22 half-grown young; noted 8 nestlings still in 3 of the nests. T. H. Langlois, "Crow Ducks on Little Chicken Island"; Ohio Conservation Bulletin, October 1950, pp. 6-7.

Warblers in Ohio Christmas Bird Counts - From a careful tabulation of warbler species reported in the eastern U. S. in Christmas Bird Counts, published in AUDUBON MAGAZINE and FIELD NOTES over the last ten years, John E. Lieftinck shows that in Ohio the chance of listing anything but a Myrtle is very slim indeed. This species has been reported in Ohio during Christmas week in every year since 1940. The only other warblers recorded at this period have been Palm Warblers in 1943, 47, 48, 49; Pine Warbler in 1946, 49; Yellowthroat in 1947, 49.