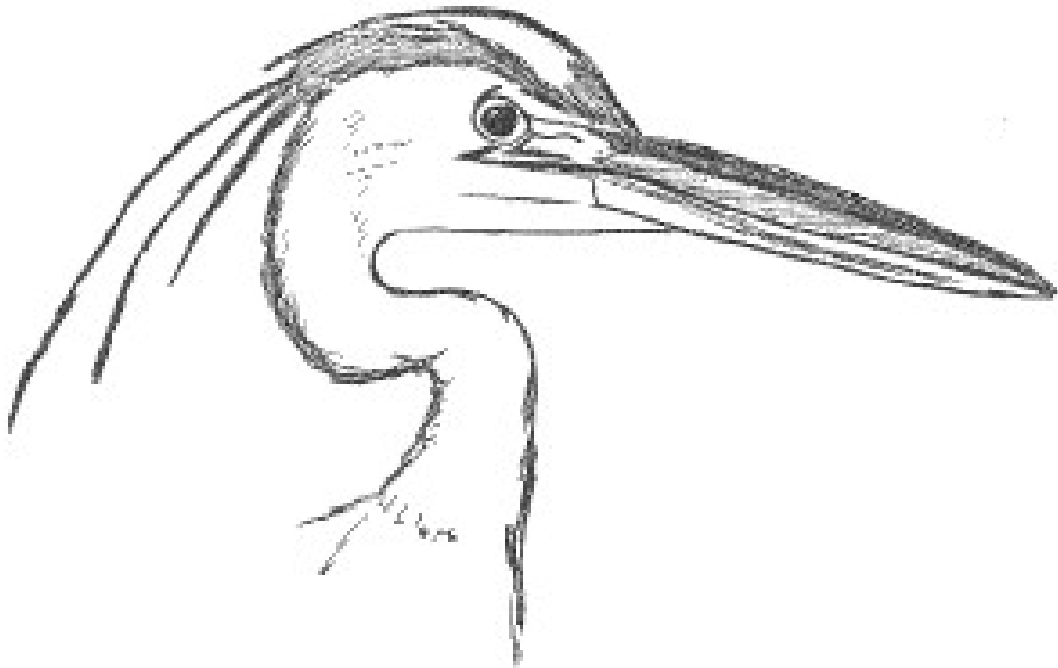


THE CLEVELAND BIRD CALENDAR



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SUMMARY OF WEATHER CONDITIONS

From U. S. Weather Bureau Reports (Cleveland Hopkins Airport)

- March - Average monthly temperature of 24.0° - almost 13 degrees below the normal average -- made this the coldest March since record keeping began in 1870. Three days with below zero readings helped make this the coldest month of the winter, which has been true only three times before. Snow covered the ground most of the month, total snowfall of 19.5 inches being the heaviest for any winter month since 1954.
- April - Undistinguished weather-wise. Temperature averaging 51.0° was 3.7° above normal. Precipitation was almost normal and was quite well distributed throughout the month.
- May - Rather cloudy with frequent periods of light rain, resulting in above normal precipitation and below normal temperatures.

* * * * *

All records, observations, and comments should be sent to
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COMMENT ON THE SEASON

Absence of Early Migrants. Not until almost the end of March did the icy hand of winter relax its clutch on the Cleveland region and the area far to the south. Inland ponds were frozen over during all, or nearly all, of the month, and Lake Erie was extensively ice-covered. As a consequence of these conditions, which had prevailed from shortly after mid-February, the arrival of the hardy first contingent of spring migrants was extremely tardy. Thus for the month of March there were no records of the Pied-billed Grebe, Yellow-shafted Flicker, and Eastern Bluebird; and until March 27 there were only one or two reports of the Killdeer, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, and Brown-headed Cowbird. A single Eastern Phoebe was observed on March 30 and 31, some three weeks after the average first date of arrival.

First Migratory Movement. Beginning on March 26, when the prevailing wind was from the southwest, a warm front advanced upon the Cleveland region bringing with it an impressive migratory movement of hawks, crows, and blackbirds which appeared on the 27th moving from west to east along the lakefront and, in the case of the blackbirds, inland, too. From the high cliff at Perkins Beach overlooking Lake Erie, eight species of hawks were seen migrating east following the lakeline on the morning of March 27. Among them were 8 Red-tailed, 5 Red-shouldered, 1 Rough-legged, and 7 Sparrow Hawks, and one Peregrine Falcon (Klamm). Starlings, too, were moving east past Perkins Beach, some 2,000 being recorded between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. that day, but the flights of the other "blackbirds" seemed to be confined to the late afternoon. Beginning about 4:00 p.m. flights of Common Grackles moved east past Lakewood Park and were soon followed by separate as well as by mixed flocks of Grackles, Red-winged Blackbirds, and Brown-headed Cowbirds. These flights of blackbirds -- sometime several thousand in a flock -- continued until a few minutes before sundown, and they were observed inland, at Clague Park and in Lakewood, as well as along the lakefront (Klamm).

The easterly migration of blackbirds and of Crows lasted from March 27 through April 3, being especially heavy on the morning of March 30, when flights were noted on both the east and west side of Cleveland and along the lake in downtown Cleveland. This movement of blackbirds and Crows on the east side of Cleveland seemed to follow the ridgeline of the Portage Escarpment, which separates the "heights" area from the lake plain and which runs in a roughly east-west direction starting at about Lake View Cemetery where the birds were first noted (Newman). That this migration was widespread and not a mere local phenomenon is shown by the fact that on March 30, in the vicinity of Buffalo, New York, two observers "along the south shore of Lake Erie . . . counted 126 migrating hawks, approximately 35,000 Starlings and Icterids, as well as appreciable numbers of Killdeer and Water Pipits and lesser numbers of other small land birds" (The Prothonotary, April 1960).

Added to the flights of blackbirds and Crows along the lakefront at Cleveland on the morning of April 2, were flights of Killdeer, Mourning Doves, Yellow-shafted Flickers, Robins, Eastern Bluebirds, and Meadowlarks. Particularly noteworthy was the migration of Bluebirds, of which bands of 8, 12, and 5 were counted at Perkins Beach in a period of 90 minutes (Klamm). The morning of the following day saw a great influx of Tree, Field, and Song Sparrows and of Slate-colored Juncos. Still moving east were Killdeer, Mourning Doves, and a lesser number of Meadowlarks. Oddly enough, throughout this entire eight-day period there was only one report of Canada Geese -- a flock of 70 flying north over Clague Park on March 27.

Later Migratory Movements. With the coming of a warm front on April 13 and. The advance of another warm front into northern Ohio on April 17, large numbers of Slate-colored Juncos and of sparrows -- Tree, Chipping, Field, Vesper, Savannah --appeared, The Golden-crowned Kinglet also was quite numerous on April 16, but for the month of April as a whole this species was reported far less often and in smaller numbers than in April 1959. Only one hawk flight was reported in April, on the 17th when a band of ten Broad-winged Hawks moved east "in sweeping circles" over Rocky River Valley (Klamm). Coincident with southerly winds and the passage of another warm front, a constant stream of Barn Swallows, "mostly in ones, twos, and threes", moved east on April 30, just off the shoreline at Cleveland (Carrothers).

From May 3 to the 7th favorable south and southeast winds prevailed, and a varied company of Swainson's Thrushes, vireos, warblers, Scarlet Tanagers, and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks appeared at that time. A heavy wave of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks occurred at Hambden on May 3 (Harm), and in the late afternoon of May 8, following an all-day rain, "there was a tremendous influx of Scarlet Tanager, orioles, and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks" at Waite Hill (Sherwin).

Observers agreed, however, that the peak period for warblers was from May 16 through the 21st. A large wave of warblers "moving southwest to northeast" passed through the Akron area on May 16 (Ulrich), and another Akron observer commented that the 16th "seemed to be the best day" there (Wiley). In Willoughby the "best warbler wave" occurred on May 17 (Barbour), while a "small one" passed through that locale during the night of May 19 (Skaggs).

In Forest Hill Park, Cleveland Heights, where a daily early morning census was taken from April 13 through May 24, a large wave of warblers and of Swainson's Thrushes appeared on May 17, and a truly massive flight on May 20, when a warm front moving northeast out of the lower Mississippi Valley carried with it not only warblers but an uncountable host of cuckoos, Eastern Kingbirds, Empidonax flycatchers, Scarlet Tanagers, Bobolinks, and small fringillids (Newman). Large numbers of warblers, particularly the Tennessee, passed through the Rocky River Valley and Lakewood Park on May 21, while on that same day but far to the east, at the Holden Arboretum and Stebbins Gulch, a great surge of warblers poured through. Of the 19 species observed in that locality, the Tennessee Warbler was by far the most numerous. Next in order of abundance were the Black-pollled, Bay-breasted, and Redstart (Bole, Jr.).

Easterly Movement of Jays. Unfortunately, there was not an unbroken continuity of observation along the lakefront during April and May. Thus it is impossible to determine the extent and magnitude of the easterly movement of Blue Jays which often occurs during those months. It is evident, however, that a flight was in progress on April 24, when an estimated 150 jays were observed on the Sunday Morning Bird Walk at Huntington Beach. Similar movements were reported in mid-May; and on the morning of May 21, more than 200 birds were noted as they traveled past Lakewood Park (Klamm) Even as late as May 29, small numbers of jays were still moving east.

Thrushes. Seemingly somewhat late in arriving, the Wood Thrush was not recorded until April 25; and it was not commonly observed until May 1. The Veery, too, was rather tardy, not being reported until May 4, which is almost eleven days after the average first date of arrival. Both the Swainson's and the Gray-cheeked Thrush were on time. The former was abundant from

May 15 to the 25th, and the Gray-cheeked, too, was reported most often in that period. In the vicinity of Elyria the Gray-cheeked was especially numerous, one observer recording 19 birds there on May 18, and nine on May 23; among them were several singing birds on both dates (Johnson).

After the heavy mortality suffered by the Hermit Thrush in the late winter and early spring of 1958 when snow and sub-freezing temperatures prevailed for extended periods in its wintering range in the southern states, this bird, among several others, was described as a "disaster" species. It may still occupy, or may again occupy, that status; for in this entire spring there were only 13 records totaling just 20 individual birds, and nine of these records were for the month of April. In contrast, the spring of 1956, for example, produced 51 records of this thrush totaling 121 individuals, and the bulk of these records were well distributed from mid-April to May 11. First record for the Hermit Thrush this spring was of a single bird on April 13, which is almost three weeks after the average first date of arrival.

Influx of Waxwings. During March and the first three weeks of April the Cedar Waxwing was reported fairly often in flocks ranging from a half dozen to several dozen birds. Then in the last ten days of April and the first half of May there were only seven records of this species and a high count of just six birds. Beginning about May 20, however, the number of records and the number of birds observed grew ever larger until by the end of May a veritable invasion of Cedar Waxwings had occurred.

Sizable flocks were observed in many localities, and several flights of birds moved east along the shoreline at Lakewood and Perkins Beach on May 28 and 29. The largest concentration was reported in the Akron area on the last three days of May. In Goodyear Heights Metropolitan Park on the 29th, a paced-off area measuring about 200 yards on a side contained an estimated 400 to 500 birds, and there were large flocks elsewhere in that park as well as in Sand Run Metropolitan Park. On May 30, "small groups of waxwings, from about five to 20 birds, were seen simply everywhere" in a tour of the country north of Akron (DeSante).

Invasion of Northern Finches. Although the boreal weather in March definitely discouraged the arrival of spring migrants, it seemed to intensify the invasion of a vast number of Redpolls, Tree Sparrows, and Snow Buntings, and many Lapland Longspurs, too. (March was also productive of many large flocks of Horned Larks, among which were some of the northern subspecies (Johnson)). The influx of the Redpolls, Tree Sparrows, and Snow Buntings actually began in mid-February and gradually increased both numerically and in breadth of distribution until by the end of that month flocks of 100 or more were commonly observed. These flocks seemed to grow even larger during the first ten days of March, and they remained in the region until about March 23.

As an example of the abundance of the Tree Sparrow, a single observer on March 10 recorded a total of 609 birds, in groups of 10 to 250, along a stretch of Russia Road, just west of Elyria (Johnson). On March 6, also in the vicinity of Elyria, "a rather accurate count made late in the day when the birds were gathering to roost" produced a total of 500 Redpolls (A. R. Clausen fide Johnson). Redpolls were also reported from Lorain (Lebold) and were regularly observed "in flocks of 50 to 75 at various places in the eastern part of Bath Township, Summit County" (DeSante). Near Wellington, which is just beyond the southwestern border of our region, some 300 to 400 Snow Buntings "took possession of a weedy fifty-acre stubble cornfield" in late February and they were

still present on March 5 (Clisby). An estimated 400 Snow Buntings were observed on March 7 near Madison in Lake County, bordering our region to the east (Howard P. Walding *vide* Savage). These various flocks of northern fringillids were not of course isolated local phenomenon, for they were a part of a widespread incursion, which in the case of the Redpoll extended from the Atlantic coast to the Rocky Mountains and in the case of the Snow Bunting was nationwide (See Audubon Field Notes June 1960).

New Records For annotation in the Birds of the Cleveland Region are the following records of occurrence:

New earliest spring date - Caspian Tern (4) - April 9, Lorain (Lebold)

New latest spring date -

Caspian Tern (2) - May 30, Lakewood Park (Klamm)

Water Pipit (3) - May 29, Burke Lakefront Airport (Klamm)

Cape May Warbler (1) - May 28, Lakewood Park (Klamm)

Chestnut-sided Warbler (1). - May 31, Warrensville Farms (Knight)

Palm Warbler (1) - May 28, Rocky River Reservation (Ackermann)

Rusty Blackbird (1) - May 13, Aurora Lake (Hamann)

NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

Little Blue Heron - On April 2, Maurice B. Walters discovered a fully adult bird in the Chagrin River Valley just east of Squires Castle, where it remained through April 12, during which time it was observed by several contributors (Carrothers *et al*). Not only is this the first spring record in the past ten years but it is also almost four weeks in advance of the previous earliest spring date of April 28, 1948.

Yellow-crowned Night Heron - In the Rocky River Reservation, which has been the source of more than 80% of the records for this species, one bird was recorded on the Sunday Morning Bird Walks on May 8 and May 22, and a single bird again on May 31 (Ackermann). Although this heron has occurred quite regularly in the Reservation in late summer and early autumn, it has rarely been seen there in the spring.

Snow Goose - An immature bird -- probably the same one that had wintered with a flock of Canada Geese -- remained at the Sherwin Pond in Waite Hill from April 1 through the 19th (Sherwin and Flanigan).

King Eider - Two of the three birds that had wintered along the Cleveland lakefront from early December were observed at Whiskey Island, near the mouth of the Cuyahoga River, on March 12 and 13, when the lake was almost 100% ice-covered. Then a single individual was sighted elsewhere along the lakefront on March 19, 26, and 27, which is the latest spring record of occurrence (Klamm).

Peregrine Falcon - The following four records, each of a single bird, constitute the largest number of spring records in the past ten years: March 27, Perkins Beach (Klamm); April 2, Chagrin River Valley (Raynes); April 17, Aurora Lake (Bush); and May 1, on the Sunday Morning Bird Walk at Rocky River Reservation.

Pigeon Hawk - Just north of Akron, along Riverview Road at Old Portage, on March 5, an adult male dashed across the road and alighted on a pole near the rail-road tracks, affording the observer a brief opportunity to note the intensity of the blue feathering of this particular individual (DeSante).

Snowy Owl - Apparently attracted by the "squeaking" of the observers, a fine white specimen lightly flecked with brown suddenly appeared near the covered bridge at Everett on March 19, and then quickly flew away (Glassner).

Mockingbird - (1) The bird that had spent the autumn and winter in the general vicinity of a nursery in Bedford remained until May 13 (Luedy); (2) one was recorded at Waite Hill on April 21 (Sherwin), and the same or possibly another bird was observed there on May 5 (Flanigan); (3) the two birds which had appeared at a feeding station in Bath Township, Summit County, in early January stayed in the area until sometime in April (Glassner).

Water Pipit - An estimated 250 birds were resting and feeding on May 15 at Burke Lakefront Airport, where they were "all over the field from one end to the other" (Klamm). Apparently their stay was brief, for early on the morning of the following day only about 30 birds were present (Carrothers).

Kentucky Warbler - A singing male occurred in Chestnut Hill Cemetery, Cuyahoga Falls, on May 18, which is the first spring record since 1956 (Wiley).

Western Meadowlark - At Burke Lakefront Airport, where this species was present in the summer of 1958 and the spring and summer of 1959, a singing bird was observed on April 23 (Newman), and on May 1 and 15. Then a pair was seen there on May 22 and 29 (Klamm).

Yellow-headed Blackbird - In the small patch of cattail marsh just east of the Nike site at Burke Lakefront Airport, a fine adult male was discovered on the morning of May 22, and it was still there at the end of the month (Klamm). This bird sang regularly from the tops of dead vegetation, though it was sometimes forced into deeper cover by attacking Redwinged Blackbirds which constantly harassed it and occasionally even drove it out of the marsh. There are just two prior records for this western species in the history of the region; both are of single dates of occurrence, the most recent being May 9, 1957 near Barberton.

Red Crossbill - For fully five minutes in the early evening of May 24, an adult male sang steadily from high in a dead elm tree on the grounds of a residence in Waite Hill. Later it flew into another tree and continued its loud and distinctive song. While it was perched in the leafless elm tree, the triangular patch of brick-red rump feathers "fairly glowed in the evening light" (Flanigan). Not since April 1956 has this species been reported in the region.

Oregon Junco - (1) Early on the morning of March 9, two birds appeared at a backyard feeding station in Bath Township, just north of Akron, and remained for a brief time (Glassner). Of the some half dozen records of this species in the history of the Cleveland region, this is the first report of more than one bird. (2) March 29 was the last date of occurrence of a bird which had regularly come to a window feeding station in Broadview Heights since November 29, 1959 (Smith).

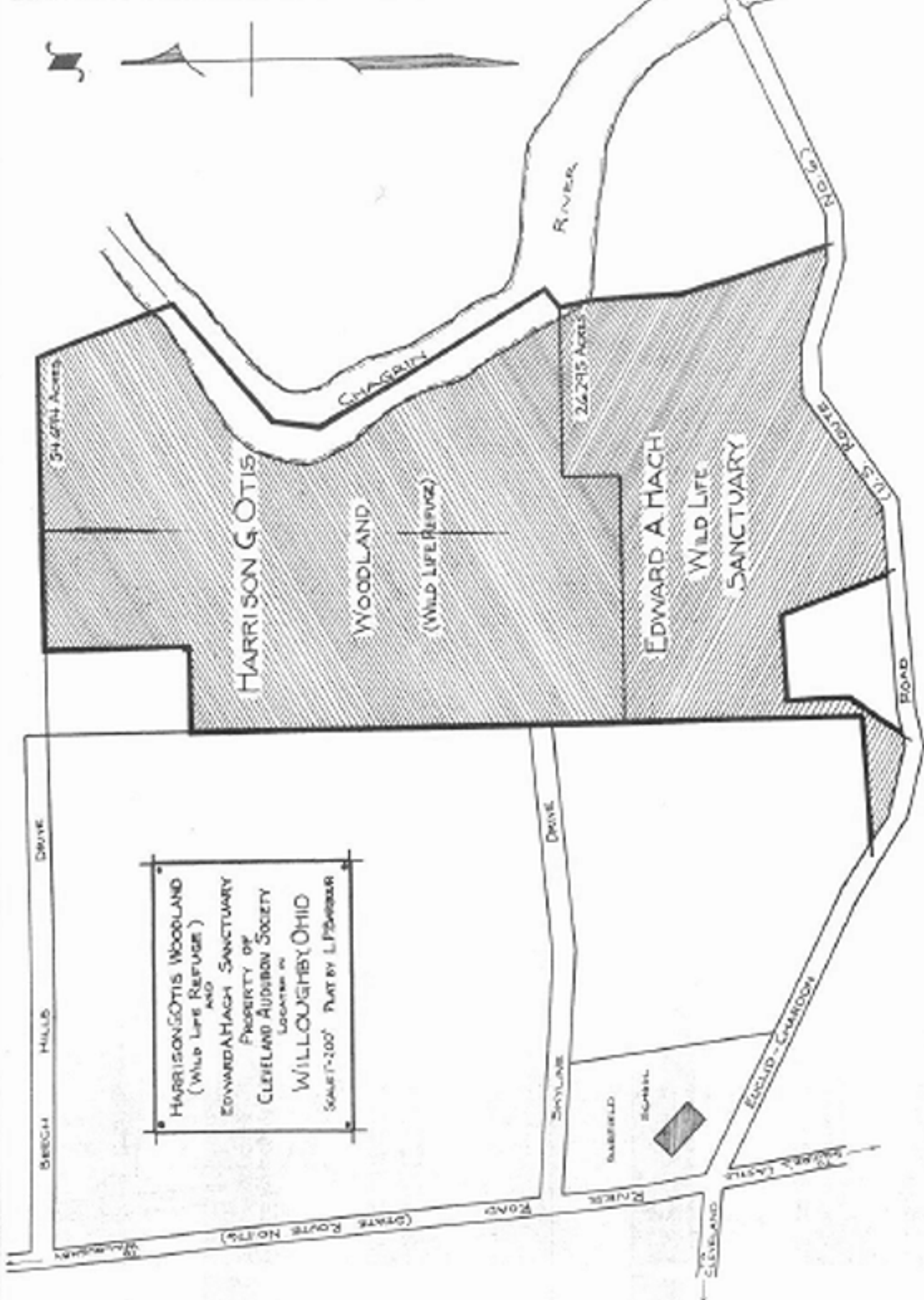
Harris's Sparrow - At noon on May 24, a fully adult bird perched for several minutes in the open edge of a brushy marshland along Route 22)4. at the southern border of Akron, but it could not be found there the next day (Westmeyer). This is the second successive spring this accidental migrant has been reported in the Cleveland region. Prior to 1959 there had. been only five records of occurrence, the most recent being May 2, 1943.

FIELD NOTES

Grouse Drums at Edge of Highway. Just before 7:00 a.m. on May 11, as I was driving into Cleveland on Route 322, I witnessed a Ruffed Grouse drumming on the shoulder of the highway, approximately one-half mile east of County Line Road. Two cars ahead of me whizzed by the bird within six feet at a speed of about 50 miles per hour; yet this did not seem to deter him from his drumming. There was traffic behind me but I glanced back after I passed and he was still there. What was particularly puzzling about the conduct of this bird was the fact that he was on the open highway at a considerable distance from any wooded area. - RAY HARM

Night Herons Nesting at Cleveland Zoo. In his Birds of the Cleveland Region (1950), Dr. Arthur B. Williams defines the status of the Black-crowned Night Heron as, "Uncommon migrant; not uncommon summer resident". He explains that "while we have no definite nesting data, the presence of the bird here regularly throughout the summer suggests it as a possible locally breeding species". The phrase "locally breeding" turns out to have been most appropriate, for a colony of Black-crowned Night Herons has been nesting at the Cleveland Zoo for the past four or five years. So I was informed by Zoo staff members.

On April 16, I visited the Zoo for the purpose of studying this colony of herons, which are completely wild birds and not a part of the Zoo's captive population. The nesting colony occupied a cluster of trees growing alongside the cages containing the large birds of prey and overlooking the waterfowl pond. I counted six occupied nests and 15 adult birds. Although I did not return at a later time to discover whether young were in the nests, I learned from one of the keepers that in other years the night herons had been successful in their nesting. The nearby waterfowl pond, which contains fish, is apparently their principal source of food. - DONALD L. NEWMAN



54,254 Acres

HARRISON G. OTIS

WOODLAND

(WILD LIFE REFUGE)

EDWARD A. HACH

WILD LIFE

SANCTUARY

26,295 Acres

CHAGRIN RIVER

RIVER

NO. 2

705 ROUTE

ROAD

DRIVE

HILLS

BRECH

HARRISON G. OTIS WOODLAND
 (WILD LIFE REFUGE)
 AND
 EDWARD A. HACH SANCTUARY
 PROPERTY OF
 CLEVELAND AUDUBON SOCIETY
 LOCATED IN
 WILLOUGHBY, OHIO
 SCALE 1" = 100' PLAT BY L. F. DEWEAR

DRIVE

SCHOOL

SCHOOL

EDGEMOND - CHAGRIN

CLEVELAND

(STATE ROUTE NO. 705)

POND

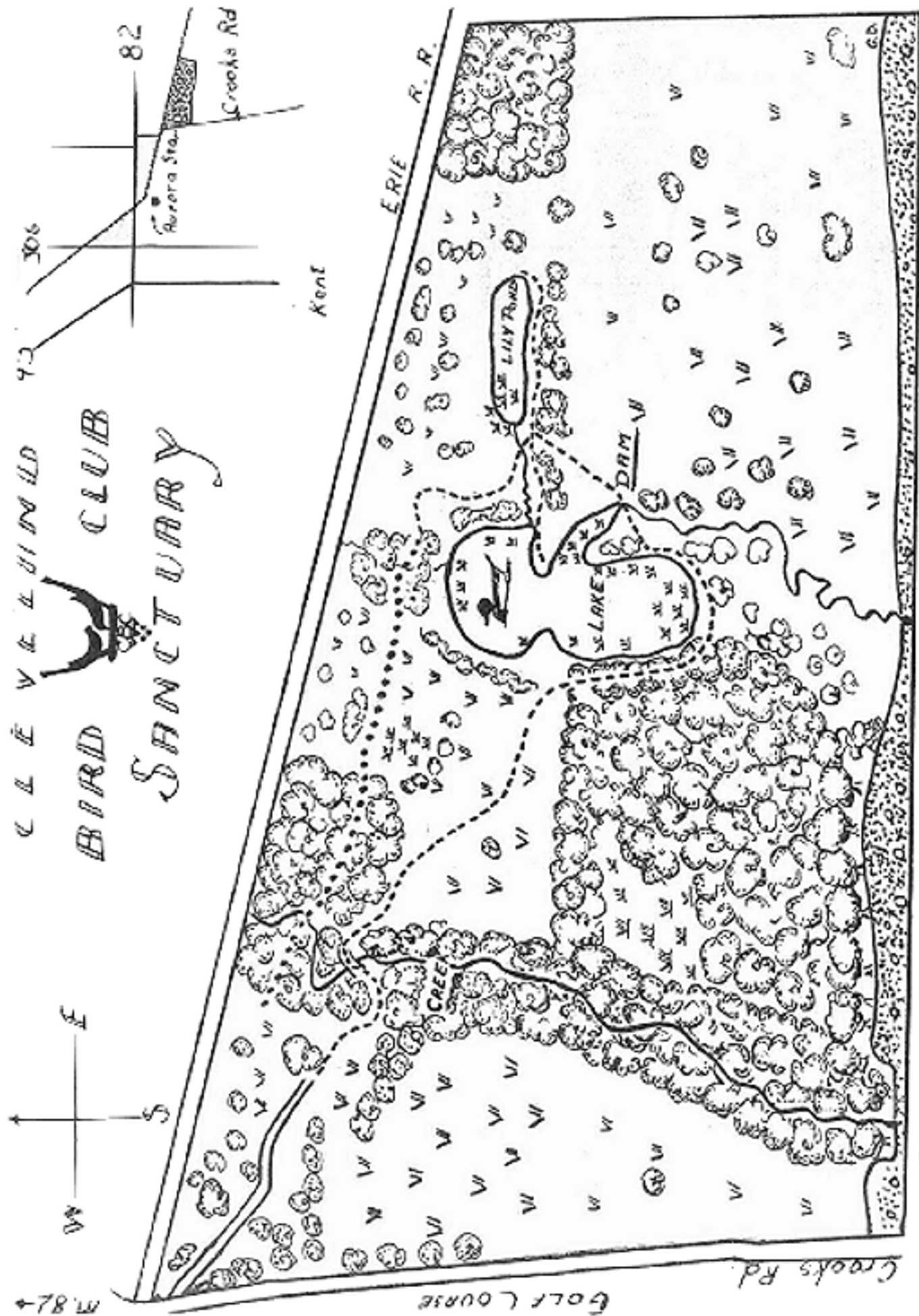
POND

MAPLE LANE

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--- P.F.F.V.

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