



CLEVELAND REGION

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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 | 51 Stebbin's Gulch |
| 22 Natural Science Museum | 52 Chardon |
| Wade Park | 53 Burton |
| 23 Baldwin Reservoir | 54 Punderson Lake |
| 24 Shaker Lakes | 55 Fern Lake |
| 25 Lake View Cemetery | 56 LaDue Reservoir |
| 26 Forest Hill Park | 57 Spencer Wildlife Area |
| 27 Bedford Reservation | |
| 28 Hudson | |
| 29 Kent | |



CLEVELAND METROPOLITAN
PARK SYSTEM



PORTAGE ESCARPMENT
(800-foot Contour Line)

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SUMMARY OF WEATHER CONDITIONS

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

- June - Quite cool throughout, especially from the 13th through 19th when the mean temperature was 60°. Rainfall of 3.05 inches, which was well scattered through the month, was 0.38 inches below normal.
- July - With 18 days on which the average temperature was below normal, the monthly average of 69° was 2.5° below normal. Rainfall totaled 3.01 inches, of which 2.7 inches were recorded in the first nine days.
- August - Rainy during seven of the first ten days and five of the last ten days. Sunshine hours totaled only 54% of possible. Temperatures were generally moderate to cool, and on only seven days did the maximum reading exceed 85°.

All records, observations, and comments should be mailed to Donald L. Newman, 14174 Superior Road, Cleveland, Ohio 44118.

COMMENT ON THE SEASON

The most interesting and most important events of the summer were the nestings of the Red-breasted Nuthatch in Rocky River Reservation (see Bittner's account in the Field Notes section of this issue). It was reliably reported, too, that this nuthatch nested this summer in North Chagrin Reservation and in Holden Arboretum; unfortunately, no accounts of these nestings were received. Although the Red-breasted Nuthatch was known to breed in the white pine-hemlock forest on Little Mountain and was considered to be a breeding bird at Holden Arboretum, no detailed nesting observations had ever been reported from these localities or from anywhere else in the Cleveland region. Thus the account of the nesting in Rocky River Reservation is of singular value.

Other significant aspects of the summer are reviewed below.

Buteos in Migration. Because of the unfavorable topography of the Cleveland region, with its lack of long, high north-south ridges to serve as flight lines, migrating hawks do not seem to pass through the region in any numbers in late summer or autumn. Of particular interest, then, is the flight of a dozen Red-tailed Hawks and of 11 unidentified Buteos from north to south over the western edge of Cuyahoga Falls between noon and 1:30 p.m. on August 26. They were at a height of perhaps 350 to 450 feet, and most of them appeared within a short time (Hjelmquist).

Shorebirds in Good Number. At White City and at Nimisila and Mogadore Reservoirs, transient shorebirds appeared in considerable variety and in good, though not exceptionally large, numbers. By July 10, seven species of migrants were recorded, including three Dowitchers at White City on the 7th (Carrothers). In the final week of July numbers increased appreciably and a greater variety appeared. During August the shorebird population remained high.

Swifts and Nighthawks on the Move. An exodus, though perhaps not true migration, of the Common Nighthawk began as early as August 9, when at about 3:00 p.m. a "loose flock of 45 to 50 birds was observed moving westward parallel to Route 20 in Rocky River. They were at treetop level, not circling, and were silent" (Cook). The first southerly movement reported consisted of nine birds, singly or in twos, which "flew straight as arrows, with no swooping and no calling", as they passed over the Shaker Lakes area in a half-hour period on the evening of August 15 (Tramer).

In late afternoon of August 24 and at early evening on August 25, Nighthawks and Chimney Swifts were moving on a southerly course over Cuyahoga Falls. Then an extraordinary flight of Nighthawks was observed there on August 26, when 476 birds were tallied as they passed in large groups at intervals between 11:15 a. m. and 1:30 p.m. This migration, which included a small number of Chimney Swifts, consisted of two flight patterns at the same altitude and sometimes moving simultaneously: one moving from northwest to southeast directly above the observer, the other moving north to south on the western

horizon, Because of the distance it was not possible to count the birds in this latter movement. Again on the 26th, between 5:15 and 6:15 p.m., 64 Nighthawks and 72 Chimney Swifts were recorded as they moved south. And, finally, between 8:45 and 9:00 p.m., 60 Nighthawks were counted in passage over Cuyahoga Falls (Hjelmquist).

In small numbers Nighthawks continued to move through the region to the end of August, though not in a consistent direction. For example, on the 30th near the lake at Bay Village during early evening "29 silent singles were seen passing over on a southeast heading", while on the following evening in the same locality "16 singles were seen passing over toward the west" (Cook).

Martins Congregate Near Lake Erie Shoreline. Flocking of Purple Martins on July 19 and 20 at Bay Village, where they were feeding on clouds of flying insects, seemed to mark the beginning of the buildup of the population of these birds along and close to Lake Erie from Clifton Park in Lakewood to Bay Village. Though no large concentrations were noted during the rest of July and the first week of August, scattered groups numbering 30 to 150 birds were observed in that area. On August 7, small bands totaling about 300 birds were perched on utility wires in Avon Lake, and by the next day their number had increased to an estimated 1,000, while in Bay Village some 300-400 had gathered near the lake (Cook), In that same locality on August 23, a flock of 1,000-1,200 was reported (Stasko).

Movement of Purple Martins through the Cleveland region was first observed on August 20 at Bay Village (see Cook's account in the Field Notes section of this issue). On the next four days in that locale small groups of 5-10, and sometimes single birds, were seen traveling westward at various times of day. At Lorain, where "hundreds of Martins were feeding at a tremendous height" above the lake shore on August 29, some 500 were tallied in about five minutes at mid-morning on the 31st as they flew west along the edge of the lake (Dolbear).

Scarcity of the Carolina Wren. Apparently still suffering from the decimating effects of the severe winter of 1962-63, the Carolina Wren was exceedingly scarce this summer. It was reported from just four localities, but in two of these it was clearly a late-summer stray rather than a breeding bird. A successful nesting, did occur, however, in Bedford Reservation where two adults and a juvenile bird were seen on June 19 (Knight). In Rocky River Reservation, from which this wren has always been reported more commonly than from any other area in the region, it was observed in just three localities and only during July and August. Evidence of a successful nesting was obtained on August 14 when a pair was sighted "carrying food, apparently to fledglings" (Klamm).

Passerine Migration Begins in July. Although many locally breeding birds were still caring for young or were undertaking a second nesting in July, some few passerine species had already left their breeding grounds and were moving toward their winter range or to some intermediate assembly area. Thus between 7:20 and 8:00 a.m. on July 9,

Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles were moving steadily west past White City (Carrothers).

In a field in Gates Mills on July 19, "two flocks of Bobolinks appeared -- one of 44 and the other of 32 birds. They were undoubtedly migratory groups since they stayed together and since most of the males were in molt; the black of their underparts was patched with buff. There was no singing or other evidences of territoriality among the males. It was doubtful that these flocks contained any birds of the year because there seemed to be about a 1:1 ratio of birds in adult male plumage to those in female plumage" (Tramer).

A Black and White Warbler feeding in alders along the Cuyahoga River in Brecksville Reservation on July 21 was the first of the migratory warblers reported (Knight). Following a late afternoon thunderstorm on July 24, bringing with it a stiff northwesterly wind, a band of four "yellow-green" warblers -- obviously migrants from their actions but too distant to be identified -- appeared in a brushy opening at Forest Hill Park, Cleveland Heights (Newman).

More Migrants Arrive in August. A few, scattered single migrant warblers were observed in the first three weeks of August, notably a Blackburnian on the first in Bedford Reservation (Knight). Then on the weekend of August 21-22, nine species of warblers were recorded in various parts of the region, though in scant numbers, On the 21st an Olive-sided Flycatcher was seen in Rocky River Reservation (Klemm), and on the 22nd two Red-breasted Nuthatches were feeding in the evergreens at Lower Shaker Lake (Newman).

The passage of a cold front on the weekend of August 28-29 accelerated the pace of migration. On the 29th "the first good influx of warblers" occurred in Rocky River Reservation (Stasko), and on the 30th the Trailside Naturalist in the Reservation, Kent Scott, reported a "heavy warbler migration" (fide Wallin). Also, on the 30th in a partly wooded area near the lake shore in Bratenahl, seven species of warblers were recorded and Red-breasted Nuthatches were quite numerous (Raynes).

NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

Common Loon - At Nimisila Reservoir one bird was observed on July 28, three on August 5, and one thereafter to the 31st (Hjelmquist). Since each of them was in "winter" plumage, they were apparently immatures; for the adult does not acquire its winter plumage until much later in the year.

Double-crested Cormorant - On July 31 at Lorain an immature - "its neck and head a light beige" -- was discovered by an observer whose residence overlooks Lake Erie where this bird was diving near shore (Dolbear). This is the first summer record since July 1949.

Little Blue Heron - There were two reports of this species, for which there had been no summer records since 1959: (1) an immature bird in Rocky River Reservation on July 13, the earliest "fall" date in the

history of the region (Owen Davies fide Stasko), and this bird was there the following day (Stasko); (2) two immatures, usually together, were seen at Nimisila Reservoir on several dates from July 24 to August 7 (Hjelmquist).

Common Egret - Occurring more numerously than in the past several summers, this egret was reported from seven localities. The first record was of a single individual at White City on July 7 (Raynes); five at the Sherwin Pond in Waite Hill on July 30 was the largest number reported (Sherwin); and the bird at Upper Shaker Lake was observed over the longest period -- from July 11 to August 31 (Knight).

Yellow-crowned Night Heron - An immature bird was recorded at Sunset Pond in North Chagrin Reservation on August 13, 14, and 17 (Carrothers, Collins, Kitson).

Least Bittern - On August 21 at Mogadore Reservoir two young -- some down feathers still on their heads -- "were sitting together in a clump of cattails where one adult had flown in and out on the 17th." At the Reservoir on August 25, a total of five adults was recorded (Hjelmquist).

Golden Eagle - At about 10:00 a.m. on July 25, this bird appeared at a moderate height above Corning Lake in Holden Arboretum, sailed on and seemed to catch a thermal over the field area beyond, when it flapped just once as if to correct direction, and then, soaring ever higher, disappeared to the west (Raynes). This is seemingly the first summer record in this century.

King Rail - One adult with four young was observed on July 4 at the edge of the marsh along Rockhaven Road near Chesterland (Raynes), and a solitary adult was found there on July 7 (Carrothers), and on July 10 (Gaede).

Black Rail - On July 21 in a cattail-sedge association on the south edge of Mentor Marsh, one bird, which remained perfectly still, was studied at close range for several minutes before it flushed into the air and disappeared from view (Temple). This is the first record of occurrence in the history of the Cleveland region.

Piping Plover - One was sighted at White City on August 9 (Surman, Jr.)

Willet - At White City on August 7, four birds together with several dozen "peep" sandpipers were feeding on the partly-exposed mud flat (Klamm).

Knot - A bird in breeding plumage remained at White City from June 6 to 8 (Carrothers et al).

White-rumped Sandpiper - One stopped briefly on July 31 on a private pier in Lorain (Dolbear); and one was identified at Nimisila Reservoir on August 25 (Hjelmquist).

Stilt Sandpiper - (1) At White City on the morning of August 1, twelve were present -- many of them still having the barred underparts of the breeding plumage (Carrothers); this is the largest number ever reported. Then single birds were observed there on August 7 (Klamm) and August 22 (Stasko). (2) Three birds, which "still had bars on their bellies, were feeding together away from the other shorebirds" at Nimisila Reservoir on August 7 (Hjelmquist).

Western Sandpiper - A single individual was seen at White City on August 9 and 10, and another there on August 27 (Surman, Jr.).

Iceland Gull - "Silent and inactive most of the time", this bird whose "ghost white color immediately set it apart" from nearby Herring and Ring-billed Gulls, was studied over a period of three hours on July 3 at Harmon's Beach in Lorain. At times it poked along the beach edge, then dabbled in the water or floated motionlessly, and finally flew to a sandbar where it settled (Stasko). This is the first summer record in the history of the region.

Whip-poor-will - In Bedford Reservation two birds were heard just before dawn on June 5 and one on June 19 (Knight). Also during June, on a number of evenings, a bird was heard in Brecksville Reservation (Wallin).

Red-breasted Nuthatch - In addition to the nesting pair in Rocky River Reservation (see Field Notes section), this species occurred elsewhere as follows: (1) also in Rocky River Reservation in a pine grove on a hill about one-half mile from the site of the nesting pair, one bird on June 22 and two on June 26 (Stasko); (2) a single individual on July 11 in Gates Mills in an "area which has extensive fir, spruce, and white pine plantings" (Tramer); (3) one bird in a stand of pines at Warrensville Farms on July 22 (Knight).

Brown Creeper - (1) On June 5 and August 19, a bird was seen in Mentor Marsh, where numerous dead American elm trees might have provided a suitable nest site (Flanigan). (2) A bird which was killed when it flew against a picture window was found on July 20 at a residence near Chesterland in Geauga County (Schlesinger).

Short-billed Marsh Wren - (1) In the same dry upland field at Warrensville Farms where three birds were singing in late May, three pairs apparently nested this summer. "The birds were easily flushed but usually difficult to observe for any length of time. However, on July 20 and again on the 22nd, single fledglings were observed over a period of ten to 15 minutes as they were fed by two adults. The wrens sang frequently until late in July, but only occasionally in August to the 17th. No nest was found although individuals carrying food were often seen" (Knight). (2) A singing bird was reported on July 17 in a field along Sherman. Road in Geauga County (Carrothers).

Loggerhead Shrike - An adult was watched for 45 minutes on August 21 as it preyed on grasshoppers on a brushy hillside in Bedford Reservation. (Knight).

Chestnut-sided Warbler - On July 5 and 6 in a brushy opening and along the woodland edge at the eastern end of Lower Shaker Lake, a male "sang almost constantly, even while feeding, alternating its spring and its more variable summer songs." A singing male was often found in the same area in late May (Knight).

Western Meadowlark - At the grass farm in eastern Lorain County where two singing birds were present in May, a single singing bird was observed on June 5; and it appeared that this species had bred successfully (Klamm).

House Finch - A female was observed feeding with House Sparrows on July 18 in a cow pasture on Rockhaven Road, Geauga County (Tramer). This is the first summer record for the region.

FIELD NOTES

Nesting Colony of Cliff Swallows. The large two-story barn on Rockhaven Road near Chesterland where Cliff Swallows have nested each year since about 1951 was again the site of a nesting colony this summer. In the past seven years no other nesting colony has been reported from anywhere in the Cleveland region.

On my first visit to the barn on May 28, the swallows had not yet returned, but on my next visit on June 10, I found birds working on four half-completed nests; later a fifth nest was constructed. These were located on the east side of the barn about 45 feet from the ground and were fastened to the under side of the eaves. Four of the nests, including #5 which was built last and was placed between #1 and #2, were grouped together near the north end of the barn in a row extending about four feet. The other nest was about 30 feet from the group of nests.

From June 23 to July 14, I made almost daily visits to the barn to observe the activities at the five nests. I was able to watch nest #5 almost from its beginning, construction having started on either June 24 or 25, at which time nests #1, 2, and 3 were occupied, presumably by either an incubating or a brooding bird. Work on #5 continued through June 30, with both birds of the pair participating. On June 29 and 30, a third bird joined the pair at #5 and all three seemingly added material to the nest, which was then a half saucer and never acquired the jug shape of the other nests. A third bird also appeared at the nest on July 1, but was unable to enter because the nest was already occupied by the other two.

By July 6, nest #5 had been enlarged somewhat and it was occupied through July 11, but on the next day a House Sparrow had moved in. On that same day a House Sparrow was the occupant of nest #1, though on the previous day a Cliff Swallow had been the possessor. Three or four Cliff Swallows were in the vicinity of the barn on July 13, while House Sparrows were either perching on or were actually in all four remaining nests. I saw no swallows at the barn on July 14 or thereafter.

Of the five nests which were completed and occupied, two were obvious failures. On the morning of June 29, following a nighttime thunderstorm, I found nest #4 on the ground, with the parent birds fluttering about distractedly nearby. Nest #5 was also a failure since it was occupied for no more than 12 days whereas the incubation period alone is from 12 to 14 days. Since I could not see into the nests and since I never saw fledglings in the vicinity of the barn or the surrounding country, I cannot state that any of the nests actually contained young. Yet judging from the activities of the adults, it appeared that young were hatched in nests #1, 2, and 3. For example, at nest #3 on July 6, the two adults constantly flew in and out, often entering the nest one after the other and disappearing inside. At that same nest on July 10 and 11, one of the parents seemed to be carrying food almost continuously, but it did not go completely into the nest. Thus I concluded the nestlings had grown large enough to get to the front of the jug-shaped nest.

In August of this year the barn was painted. It will be interesting to discover next summer whether this coating will prevent or discourage the Cliff Swallows from fixing their mud structures to the wooden eaves. - VERA CARROTHERS

Gathering of Martins Departs. At about 8:00 a.m. on August 20 at my home in Bay Village, a few hundred yards from Lake Erie, more than 200 Purple Martins were milling about from tree-top height on upward until they were mere specks. Most of them seemed to be drifting down and appeared to be moving southward, having come from high over the lake. All at once a flock of 400 or more took to the air from nearby trees and wires. With much twittering this flock circled the neighborhood twice as they gained altitude and mingled with the others. They then quickly descended to tree-top level and all suddenly vanished toward the southwest. None were seen in the area afterward until the evening when a few (10-15) scattered individuals were seen wending their way westward. - ROBERT L. COOK

Two Nestings of Red-breasted Nuthatch. [The following are excerpts from a detailed chronology of two successive nestings of a pair of Red-breasted Nuthatches which were observed and reported by Edward C. Bittner, who was sometimes accompanied by another observer, Harold Renkel. These observations were made in a ten-acre, fairly mature (possibly 30-year old) planting of red pine trees situated on top the ridge at Cedar Point in Rocky River Reservation. The nest area was visited briefly on 23 dates from May 10 to July 28, 1965. At the first nest, observations were made at noon, and at the second nest between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m. - Ed.]

May 10 - We discovered the pair in the pine grove where they were animatedly calling as they apparently examined a hole in the trunk of a dead pine. This hole was 18 feet above the ground and two feet below the top of the tree, with the opening facing the north-east. (The nest area was not visited again until May 25, when just one bird was heard.)

May 27 - One bird came to the nest hole with an insect, entered and peered out, withdrew and peered out again, yet still retaining the insect. Finally, the second bird appeared and alighted on a nearby tree, whereupon the first bird flew out to join it and they "talked" for a while, making soft sounds somewhat suggestive of a toned-down Ruby-crowned Kinglet. The second bird then entered the nest and the first departed, returning in a few minutes to feed its mate and fly away again to secure another feeding. Before returning and while it was still perhaps 50 to 60 feet away, it would call but not when it was close to the nest.

June 4, 7, 8 - One bird fed the other on the nest.

June 9 - One bird appeared at the nest and then flew away followed by the other. Five minutes later one returned, looked in the nest hole, and departed. Within another two minutes one of the pair entered and remained in the nest, where it was soon fed by its mate, which then left. Finally, the one bird reappeared whereupon both flew away. This activity, which occupied a period of 15 minutes, suggested that the eggs had hatched and that both birds were involved in feeding the nestlings.

June 10 - At 12:21 p.m. one bird fed the other on the nest. Several minutes later this food-gathering bird "dive-bombed" and drove off a House Wren which had approached to within two feet of the nest. And at 12:30 p.m. this same nuthatch also chased one of a band of Black-capped Chickadees which had come to within about 35 feet of the nest tree. At last, at 12:42 p.m., the one bird was able to feed its mate at the nest again.

Between about 5:45 p.m. and 6:15 p.m., when observations were resumed, both birds were bringing food to the nest at intervals of about five minutes and were departing with fecal sacs in their bills.

June 14 - The nest tree had been pushed over and the top three feet containing the nest had broken off, but it had been propped up against the lower section. We could hear the young inside; however, we did not see them being fed as we watched from a distance for some 25 minutes. In the evening of this day, Dr. Owen Davies visited the site and, in an effort to remedy the situation, he tied the nest stub to a nearby tree. At that time he heard no sound from the young. A few weeks later when he emptied the stub, he discovered it contained four dead nestlings. Examination of the stub revealed that the nest entrance was a canted ellipse measuring one inch by one and one-half inches. The cavity was six inches deep measured from the bottom of the entrance, and there was no lining of any kind.

June 16 - The nuthatches were deepening a hole in the trunk of another dead pine tree some 40 feet from the first site. Like the first nest, the opening to the cavity was 18 feet from the ground and two feet below top of the tree, though it faced more to the east than to the northeast. (Neither the first nor the second cavity was natural, and both were probably old woodpecker holes. The opening to each of the two nests was ultimately ringed with a smear of

pitch, which is a customary practice of the Red-breasted Nuthatch.)

June 17 - Both birds were near the hole, fluttering their wings. Then one flew off, the other entered the hole.

June 21 - The male came to the nest, the female followed, went inside and was fed by the male, which then flew off but returned in a few minutes to feed her again. (I use the terms "male" and "female" though in fact I was never able to discern any difference between the two. I simply assume that it was the female on the nest and the male gathering food for her.)

June 24 and 29, July 1, 6, 8 - On each of these dates the male fed the female on the nest. Sometimes after being fed, she left the nest for five or ten minutes.

July 13 - The male visited the female very frequently and changed places with her.

July 15 - During my ten-minute stay I observed five visits to the nest.

July 20 - The male and female changed places twice in the ten minutes I watched.

July 23 - When I arrived at 7:38 a.m., Blue Jays were calling in the vicinity, and the nuthatches did not visit the nest until several minutes after the jays had left, so that their first visit was at 7:55 a.m. Thereafter, feeding by both parents was very frequent and right at the entrance, giving me an opportunity to see the head of a nestling in the opening.

July 26 - The nestlings were still being fed by the parent birds.

July 23 (7:45 a.m.) - One of the adults visited the nest three times but without leaving what it carried in its bill. This was the last I observed any of this family of nuthatches. [On this same day, however, at 10:00 a.m., Fred J. Ackermann, with two other observers, visited the nest site and watched as the parents carried food to the young, possible as many as four, whose heads were sticking out of the nest opening. No further observations of either the adults or young were reported, Ed.] - EDWARD C. BITTNER