



*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                    |
| 14 Perkins Beach             | 43 Mentor Headlands          |
| 15 Terminal Tower            | 44 Mentor Marsh              |
| 16 Cleveland Public Square   | 45 Black Brook               |
| 16 Cuyahoga River            | Headlands State Park         |
| 17 Brecksville Reservation   | 46 Fairport Harbor           |
| 18 Akron                     | 47 Painesville               |
| 18 Cuyahoga Falls            | 48 Grand River               |
| 19 Akron Lakes               | 49 Little Mountain           |
| 20 Gordon. Park              | Holden Arboretum             |
| 20 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)

**THE CLEVELAND BIRD CALENDAR**

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THE WEATHER  
Fall 1986

September - Temperatures averaged out to 67.0 degrees, 2.9 degrees warmer than normal. Sunshine prevailed 46% of the time possible. Precipitation was measurable on only 11 days but totaled 6.41 inches, 3.49 inches in excess of normal. The rain fall distribution was heavier in the latter half of the month and days on which the precipitation exceeded 1.0 inch included the 11th, 25th, 27th and 30th. The Lake Erie water temperature declined from 73 degrees on the first to 68 degrees on the 30th.

October - Precipitation was distributed over 13 days and totaled 2.83 inches, 0.38 inches in excess of normal. Sunshine prevailed 44% of the time possible. Temperatures averaged out to 54.3 degrees, 1.1 degree above normal. Lake Erie water temperature declined to 61 degrees by the 31st.

November - Temperatures averaged out to 40.4 degrees, 1.5 degrees below normal. Sunshine occurred 37% of the time possible. On 12 days precipitation, including snow (3.1 inches) on the 11th, 12th, 13th totaled 3.01 inches as water, 0.25 inches in excess of normal. Lake Erie water temperature was at 60 degrees on the 1st and dropped to 47 degrees by the 30th.

## COMMENT ON THE SEASON

For the dedicated birder who was out in the field at every opportunity, the fall of 1986 provided the happy dilemma: where do I go today? September's warbler migration was strong throughout the area, early October sparrow numbers at Gordon Park were staggering, and you had to be two places at once in November if you wanted to observe a Northern Gannet, an Eared Grebe, and the Cleveland area's first Pacific Loon - all within blocks of each other at Lorain. The occurrence of the Pacific Loon was a fitting climax to a record-breaking birding year in the Cleveland area. It is hoped that all who were able did partake in a birding fall which will be hard to duplicate.

Loons, Swans Strong northerly winds of 10-20 mph on November 19 produced the only significant loon migration. Two-hundred thirty **six** were observed at Wildwood (LePage) and 176 at 38th and Euclid Avenue (Hannikman). In both instances, almost all the birds were noted between 7:40 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. Twenty-four loons were counted on November 19 after 8:10 a.m. by which time most loons had moved past lakefront viewpoints (Hoffman). Thirty-five loons at Gordon Park on November 2 was the only other significant November count of loons (Harlan).

If you were not out on November 11, you could have missed Tundra Swans altogether for the fall. Highest counts were as follows: 350 at Eastlake (Hoffman), 800 at Bay Village (Peterjohn), 600 at Silver Lake (fide Rosche), 260 in Parma Heights (Harlan), 409 at Edgewater and 165 at Perkins Beach (Klamm). What was so interesting about the swans' movements for November 11 was that all flocks mentioned above were recorded after 11:00 a.m. - about the time of a shift in the winds to the northwest. One contributor took time out for lunch during this period and did not see any swans that day! No other significant flocks were observed the rest of the season.

Waterfowl Unlike the fall of 1985 when great numbers of waterfowl moved on one particular day (November 11), there was no big one-day push in 1986. November saw very modest numbers of Common Goldeneye, Lesser Scaup, and Bufflehead along the lake from. The exception, as usual, was the Red-breasted Merganser which peaked at 29,000 between Rocky River and Huntington on November 22 (Klamm). During late November many thousands of Red-breasted Mergansers were at Lorain.

Largest numbers of Horned Grebes occurred in the last third of November with the most consistent flocks being present at Sims Park and at Lorain. Twenty-four Pied-billed Grebes at Wildwood Park on November 14 were deemed unusual for the location.

The Akron Lakes produced excellent variety and numbers of waterfowl. Most curious is an apparent preference of certain species for particular individual lakes as highest counts for the following species will attest to:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>High Count (Date)</u>
Ring-necked Duck	Lake Rockwell	600+ (11/8), 260 (11/22)
Ring-necked Duck	Si & Crystal Lake	275 (11/11), 180 (11/17)
Ruddy Duck	Mogadore Reservoir	654 (10/26), 600+ (11/6)
American Wigeon	Lake Rockwell	130 (10/6), 170 (10/15)
Hooded Merganser	Lake Rockwell	130 (11/11), 320 (11/22)

Other waterfowl highlights from the Akron area included an Oldsquaw at Mogadore on November 19 and a Surf Scoter at Springfield Lake November 8 (Rosche).

Peregrine Falcon This species appeared at Burke Airport, Gordon Park, and Sims Park along the lakefront and inland in the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area. Daily sightings were made from September 30 to October 5 with two birds, one an adult, on October 5. Last sighting was October 28 at Burke Airport when a bird frightened off the two Hudsonian Godwits that had remained at Burke for several days.

Shorebirds Two items dominated Gordon Park shorebirding—the botulism epidemic and an "invasion" of Red-necked Phalaropes. The summer's botulism outbreak continued to kill migrant shorebirds throughout September. Later migrants such as White-rumped Sandpipers and Baird's Sandpipers fell victim to the pestilence. Only with cooler fall weather and higher water levels did the outbreak abate. Though no more than 7 Red-necked Phalaropes were present at Gordon Park at one time, at least 13 did occur for 11 were actually banded and 2 birds without bands were seen. All birds were in juvenile plumage. The remarkable migration instincts of this species were revealed when two of the banded phalaropes returned to Gordon Park after they had been taken, one each, to Lake Rockwell and Mentor Headlands. The birds were transported to these locations in an effort to prevent their contracting botulism. The last phalarope was recorded on October 5. Baird's Sand-

pipers (maximum 7), Red Knot (maximum 8), and Western Sandpipers (maximum 4) were continuously present for most of September along with good numbers of Semipalmated Sandpipers and Least Sandpipers. The absence of Long-billed Dowitchers disappointed shorebird enthusiasts as this species had been recorded in small numbers in late September and early October the past couple of years. Lesser Golden-Plovers and Black-bellied Plovers for the most part must have bypassed the north coast area for maximum counts were 15 and a paltry 5 respectively.

Lake Rockwell produced good inland shorebird records. Baird's Sandpipers, Red Knot, and Western Sandpipers all appeared in the first half of September and a very curious late influx of Pectoral Sandpipers was noted on October 25 (Rosche). No unusual species or numbers of shorebirds were noted at Barberton during the season. Baldwin Lake produced a mere 2 Lesser Yellowlegs and 2 Semipalmated Sandpipers after September, 1 (Harlan).

Gulls, Terns Maximum count of Lesser Black-backed Gulls was 3 at Lorain in late November (Peterjohn). With some effort and patience, Thayer's Gulls, maximum 3, could be found at Eastlake and Franklin's Gulls, mostly first-winter birds, frequently were observed at Edgewater and Eastlake. Highest counts of the commoner gulls were as follows: Herring Gull, 9,000 on November 23, Ring-billed Gull, 51,000 on November 25, and Bonaparte's Gulls, 20,000 on November 30.

Terns were very scarce during the fall. No Black Terns or Forster's Terns were reported and 200 Common Terns along the lakefront on September 20 was the largest count for this species. The propane cannons used to frighten shorebirds away from the Gordon Park mudflat also kept terns from gathering

Owls The season's first Snowy Owl was found at Edgewater on November 3 (LePage). Another bird was soon found at Gordon Park and eventually both birds wound up at Burke Airport where they remained until the end of the season. A lighter-colored Snowy Owl appeared at Burke Airport in late November so at least 3 different owls were thought to be present along the Cleveland lakefront. Snowy Owls also appeared at Lorain in late November. It is not clear from the number of limited number of reports from Lorain exactly how many individuals were present. The birds were reportedly spotted on chimneys in town as well as around the harbor area.

Short-eared Owls could be found throughout October at Gordon Park. One is always startled, as one walks the marshes, to unexpectedly flush up a nearby Short-eared Owl. Oftentimes these birds could be seen out in plain view on the mudflat and it would take a very close approach to get them to fly off.

Warblers It appears that where you birded for warblers determined your impression of the season. Conditions that make for fallouts of migrants in the autumn, i. e., cold frontal systems out of the north and northwest, did not develop so warblers moved when they wanted, not when they were moved. September 20 seemed to be the peak for both numbers and variety of species. On that day migrating warblers filled the Mentor Headlands area. Tallies that day included 35 Magnolia Warblers, 20+ American Redstarts and Wilson's Warblers, 6 Black-throated Blue Warblers, and 15 Cape May Warblers. Late movements at Mentor Headlands saw 20 Blackpoll Warblers and 12 Wilson's Warblers on October 4. Coverage of Lake Rockwell produced 12 Magnolia Warblers and an unusual number of Cape May Warblers, 34, on September 7. Pine Warblers lingered at Lake Rockwell until the middle of October. On the negative side, disturbing were only 6 Chestnut-sided Warblers reported the entire season and what seemed like relatively light counts of the usually very abundant Yellow-rumped Warbler.

Winter Finches From 1-3 Common Redpolls were at Gordon Park in the last third of October. No other redpolls were reported anywhere between October 30 and November 19 when 12 were found at Lakewood Park Cemetery. A similar scenario occurred with Pine Siskin with up to 35 at Gordon Park in late October with smaller numbers in November at Shaker Lakes and Lakewood Park Cemetery. Only report of Evening Grosbeaks was 25 over a church parking lot in Lorain on that memorable November 23.

Yearly Summary In the Bird Calendar year now ended (December 1, 1985 to November 30, 1986), a record-breaking number of species, 286, was recorded. Previous high count was 281 in 1979-1980. Among the highlights were Pacific Loon, Tricolored Heron, Northern Gannet, Smith's Longspur, Pine Grosbeak, and Least Tern. Pacific Loon was also a new bird for the Cleveland area.



NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

Pacific Loon - For the detailed description of the Cleveland area's first (and Ohio's second) Pacific Loon at Lorain from November 22 to 29, see the Field Notes section (Peterjohn).

Red-necked Grebe - An Adult was recorded at LaDue Reservoir on October 18 (Peterjohn).

Eared Grebe - Single birds were observed at Lorain on November 23 and 29 (Rosche, Peterjohn).

Northern Gannet - A first-winter bird remained at Lorain from November 23 to 27 (LePage, Klamm et al.).

Cattle Egret - Six occurred at Gordon Park on October 23 (Klamm).

Harlequin Duck - One was noted at Lorain on November 23 (Rosche, Hannikman).

Bald Eagle - An adult remained at Lake Rockwell from October 11 to November 10 (Rosche). Lake Rockwell has become the best place to find this species in the Cleveland area.

Northern Goshawk - An adult was at Mentor Headlands on November 22 (Rosche, Hannikman).

Merlin - An immature was at Mentor Headlands on October 4 (Rosche, Hannikman). The bird allowed close approach and stayed on its perch as one of the observers passed right under it.

Piping Plover - The bird noted at Gordon Park at the end of August was last seen on September 7 when it was banded (many observers). Since the botulism outbreak was still going strong in early September, this bird was transported to Lake Rockwell which area it evidently departed as it was never seen at this location. Another (same?) bird was found at Lorain on September 9 (Pogacnik).

Hudsonian Godwit - Two birds, oftentimes in low swales and out of sight, remained at Burke Airport from October 14 to 28 (Klamm).

Marbled Godwit - Two were observed at Gordon Park on September 13 (Corbin).

Ruddy Turnstone - Two birds were found at Lorain on November 23 and one remained there until November 27 (Hannikman).

Purple Sandpiper - Only sighting for the CBC year was of a bird on the breakwall at Mentor Headlands on November 16 (Peterjohn).

Stilt Sandpiper - A new late fall departure date was established when one was found at Barberton on October 25 (Rosche). Previous late date was October 23, 1983.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper - Of rather limited occurrence this fall, maximum count at Burke Airport was 3 on September 15 (Klamm). One was also at Lorain on September 9 (Pogacnik).

Red Phalarope - One was mist netted at Gordon Park on September 20 (Talkington). Observers present were treated to direct hand-in-hand comparison between Red Phalarope and Red-necked Phalarope as both were mist netted at the same time.

Parasitic Jaeger - Single immature birds were recorded at Gordon Park on September 21, a dark-phase individual (Hannikman), and a light-phase bird on November 2 (Hoffman).

Laughing Gull - Single birds occurred at Lorain on September 30, October 8, and 24 (several observers).

Common Black-headed Gull - A very elusive individual was noted at Edgewater on November 14, 16, and 22 (Klamm et al.).

Iceland Gull - Very early birds were at Lorain on November 8 (Pogacnik) and Eastlake on November 11 and 16 (Hannikman).

Black-legged Kittiwake - Most interesting (as well as a great spot) was the Cleveland area's first adult Black-legged Kittiwake at Edgewater on November 16 (Peterjohn et al.). A first-winter bird was at Lorain on November 29 (Pogacnik).

Yellow-billed Cuckoo - Gordon Park compelled another straggler to linger from October 11 to 27 (Klamm).

Western Kingbird - Briefly, but well observed, was a bird at Lake Rockwell on September 6 (Rosche). Brief appearances locally by this species at about the same time in the month of September the past two years (a sighting at Gordon Park on September 4, 1985 was not published in the Calendar as no report was submitted to the editor by the out-of-state observer) have given hopes to birders of finding this most elusive of Ohio birds.

Gray Catbird - A very late dawdler was found at LaDue Reservoir on November 28 (Elder).

Clay-colored Sparrow - One was identified and mist netted at Gordon Park on October 4 (Corbin). This was only the second fall record of this species in CBC files.

LeConte's Sparrow - Only documented fall sighting was of a bird at Gordon Park on October 1 and 2 (LePage).

Yellow-headed Blackbird - One was at Gordon Park on September 27 (Harlan).

Common Redpoll - A new early fall date, as well as the very first October record in CBC files, was established when one was observed at Gordon Park on October 21 (Harlan). Previous early fall date had been November 2, 1957.

#### FIELD NOTES

Pacific Loon at Lorain, Ohio - The following are Bruce Peterjohn's most meticulous field notes that documented the occurrence of Pacific Loon at Lorain Harbor on November 22, 1986.

Behavior: the bird slowly swam along the lakeshore & eastern edge of the disposal basin. It briefly disappeared around the corner of the basin only to reappear and swim out into the lake and return to the lake shore. It dove on several occasions but remained above the surface for most of the period. It was observed preening and stretching but never flew.

Field Marks:

Size: direct comparisons were only available with Red-breasted Mergansers which were shorter and smaller-bodied than the loon.

Shape: as compared with a distant Common Loon, this bird had a relatively smaller head. Its forehead was rounded and sloped rather evenly to the bill; it did not have the more square forehead typical of a Common Loon. The neck was slightly thinner than the Common Loon but the bird did not have the thin-necked appearance of a Red-throated Loon.

Plumage: the forehead was dark brown, merging into a more grayish-brown crown and nape. The nape had a decided grayish cast when the bird was swimming away from the observers and appeared to be slightly lighter than the back. There was one white feather in the nape. On the head, the dark brown color extended to the bottom of the eye. While there were small whitish arcs visible over the top of the eye, these arcs did not connect with the white elsewhere on the face. The remainder of the face and chin was white. On the neck, the dark brown color extended mid-way on the sides of the neck where there was a fairly sharp demarcation with a white throat. At the base of the neck a narrow pale half-collar extended on each side but did not join across the nape. The breast was white with narrow dark barring on the sides (at close range).

The back, wing coverts, and wings were uniformly dark brown without any light edgings to the back feathers or coverts. The sides were a dusky grayish-brown although small whitish patches were visible on the flanks near the tail. The other plumage characteristics were not observed.

The overall impression was of a very dark-backed loon, considerably darker than the Commons seen in Lorain and elsewhere that day. These dark upperparts contrasted very noticeably with the white underparts which appeared to be a purer white than present in Common Loons (perhaps the darker upperparts made the underparts appear whiter).

Soft parts:

the iris was reddish-brown. The legs were grayish with distinct pinkish webs. The feet did not appear to be relatively large in comparison with the rest of the bird.

Bill: in profile, the bill was relatively slimmer than the distant Common Loon's throughout its entire length. When viewed head-on, the bill was quite narrow (laterally imposed) and only broadened where it joined the head. The bill was feathered to the nostrils.

Bill (continued)

The upper mandible had a straight culmen while the lower mandible had a very noticeable gonydeal angle although the bill did not appear to be "upturned." The culmen was entirely dark, while the remainder of the bill was a pale silver-white.

Viewing conditions:

sunny day with sun at observer's back, excellent lighting conditions.  
estimated distance as close as 200-300 feet.  
viewed with 48 x 64 telescope (Questar).

Age: adult

Identification:

The overall dark upperparts without paler edgings on the wing coverts and back, slightly paler grayish nape, rounded forehead and thinner bill appear to be diagnostic of an adult Pacific Loon in basic plumage. The white flank patch and the sharp demarcation between light and dark on the sides of the neck are also thought to be diagnostic of this species. The bill shape was not entirely typical for a Pacific Loon which is described as having "straight" bills. However, bill shape of adult loons is variable and some Pacifics can have definite gonydeal angles on the lower mandible.

The "light half collar" is also not typical for a Pacific Loon. This patch was not an extension of the white from the throat (as in diagnostic of Common Loons) but was a separate lighter patch of the side of the neck. This patch is considered to be possibly a plumage anomaly unique to this individual or possibly an artifact of the bird's molt.

Time: 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Other observer: Mary Gustafson

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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 at The Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Wade Oval, University Circle, Cleveland, Ohio, 44106. Visitors are always welcome.

The Kirtland Bird Club sponsors a **WEEKLY RARE BIRD ALERT** at (216) 289-2473. Sightings of species rare in the region as well as other interesting migration and seasonal observations should be called in to the tape on Sundays as the tape is updated with current sightings each Monday. In the case of extreme rarities, e. g., Varied Thrush, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, the tape should be called the day of the observation.

Inquiries and correspondence regarding subscriptions to the Cleveland Bird Calendar should be addressed to:

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