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December 1990, January, February 1991

Volume 87

Number 1

**BIRD**

**CALENDAR**



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**The Cleveland Bird Calendar** was founded in 1905 by Francis H. Herrick of The Western Reserve University. The purposes of the publication are to provide information on the movements of birds through the Cleveland region, to monitor population densities of resident birds, and to help in the establishment of patterns of vagrancy for rarely encountered species of the region.

The Cleveland region includes Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, Portage, and Summit Counties.

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Due dates for seasonal field reports are as follows:

**15 March - winter season**

**15 June - spring season**

**15 September - summer season**

**15 December - autumn season**

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# The Cleveland Bird Calendar

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## THE WEATHER

### Winter 1990/1991

by William Klamm

**December** - It was the wettest December on record. Precipitation came on 15 days to total 8.59 in. as water, 5.84 above normal. This included snow on 10 days accumulating to 7.4 in. Temperatures averaged 35.6 degrees, 4.5° above normal. The high was 60° on the 29th and the low was 3° on the 25th. Lake Erie temperature fell from 48° on the 1st to 38° on the 31st. Sunshine prevailed 29% of the time possible.

**January** - Temperatures averaged 27.3 degrees, 1.8° warmer than normal. A high of 52° on the 15th and 16th and a low of -1° on the 22nd set the extremes. Lake Erie temperature dropped to 34° by the 31st. Ice cover on Lake Erie was extensive from

the shoreline out by the 23rd and after. Sunshine prevailed 28% of the time. Precipitation on 15 days totaled 2.18 in., 0.29 below normal. The snow accumulation was 16.6 in.

**February** - Temperatures averaged 32.8 degrees, 1.8° above normal. The extremes were a high of 60° on the 4th and a low of 5° on the 16th. Lake Erie hit its minimum at 33° on the 23rd and after. Ice cover was variable on the lake and harbors all month. Sunshine prevailed 34% of the time. Precipitation came on 11 days to total 2.31 in., 0.11. above normal. Snowfall totaled 18.9 in., the greatest amount 9.8 in. came on the 14th and 15th. The greatest depth as 16 in. on the 11th.

## REFLECTIONS

**Thirty Years Ago:** Small flocks Of Brown-headed Cowards were found to be wintering in the region. This was a very unusual phenomenon for 1960. Rufous-sided Towhees were unusually common that winter. A Long-eared Owl was at the Cuyahoga County Airport on 29 Dec. (Rickard). The first record of Iceland Gull since 1952 was in Lorain on 1 Jan. (Smith).

**Twenty Years Ago:** A record breaking total of 82 species was recorded on the 1970 East Side Christmas Count. An immature Brant was at Baldwin Reservoir 5-20 Dec. (Peskin). An adult Brant was at Sunset Pond on 20 Jan. (Scott). A King Eider was at Edgewater Park on 27 Dec. (Ward). A Northern Goshawk was reported at Mogadore Reservoir on 27 Dec. (Capanna). A Hermit Thrush spent the winter in Cuyahoga Falls (Szabo). Five Northern Shrikes were reported for the season.

**Ten Years Ago:** Up to three White-winged Crossbills were found at Virginia Kendall Ledges on 1 Dec. 1980 (Stover. Corbin) Two Red Phalaropes were observed at Wildwood Park 6-20 Dec. (Hannikman). A Merlin was seen at Summit Lake in late December 1980 (Stover) A very tardy Swainson's Thrush was of North Chagrin Reservation on 20 Dec. (Corbin). A Varied Thrush was in Parma Heights in January (fide Klamm, LePage, Corbin).

## COMMENT ON THE SEASON

by Larry Rosche

Winter birding was described in many ways. The best was Elinor Elders oxymoron, "stellarly dull." As I read and reread reports I found that nearly all reporters felt that the season lacked excitement. This assessment was not without foundation because the number of contributors was high. One would have to conclude that considerable effort was made to locate the birds this season. Even though the season appeared to be less than adequate a very nice total of 136 species was reported. The total species count included 36 of waterfowl and 4 of warblers I think that many of us miss seeing winter finches and therefore we have a tendency to judge a good winter by the widespread occurrence of redpolls and grosbeaks. It does seem like a long time since the last really good invasion of grosbeaks. Unfortunately, the rarities were brief or uncooperative visitors and the only real excitement for many observers was the occurrence of waterfowl throughout the region. The numbers of diving ducks that congregated off Rocky River Park delighted many of us well into January. Gulls were so plentiful along Lake Erie that sorting out rarities was next to impossible. Such is the case when the dominant species is Ring-billed Gull. Northern Shrikes were in good supply and reported from all counties except Medina.

As the number of first time reporters increases, I feel compelled to make a few comments concerning written descriptions. When you see a rarity please remember that a well described bird far outweighs a lengthy description of the circumstances surrounding the observation. Good birding.

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### Winter 1990-91

A few Common Loons straggled into late December due to open water. A loon that had obviously been mistaken for a goose (one wing had been severely shattered) was seen in and around the E. 55th St. Marina 4-14 Jan. (TL, m.ob.). A loon on Best Lake 17-22 Jan. was very noteworthy (DB). Pied-billed Grebes were normal in Akron and one at the mouth of the Grand River from late December into January was slightly unusual. An **Eared Grebe** was with 25 Horned Grebes near the Gordon Park Landfill (hereafter Gordon) on 7-8 Dec. (DJH). The bird from the fall at Headlands Beach State Park (hereafter HBSP) stayed through 3 Dec. No Horned Grebes were reported in January. Small numbers of northward migrants were showing up by 27 Feb. Up to 5 Double-crested Cormorants wintered at Lorain Harbor (Hln, PP). A maximum of seven was

seen along the Cleveland lake-front (TL). Great Blue Herons managed to overwinter with relative ease and were widespread along local rivers. A Black-crowned Night-Heron was reported in December and January from Lorain (TK, JP).

December waterfowl numbers were augmented by an influx of late migrants. The most probable reason for this phenomenon was that the marshes north of us had remained open later than normal. Reports were numerous and many were detailed in the waterfowl tables on the following pages. As expected, many waterfowl were beginning to move into the region from the south by the end of the period.

**Tundra Swans** were seen in impressive numbers, considering the season. Fifty flew over Swine Creek Reservation (Geauga Co.) on 5 Dec. (fide DB). Dick and Jean Hoffman tallied 22 at Moss Point on 22

Dec. Wert saw 80 over Wadsworth on 26 Dec. Holt counted 75 at Mogadore on the same date. Seven at Oberlin Reservoir on 15 Jan. were very extraordinary (NK). The Lakewood CBC count week Tundra Swan was located by young Michael Stewart (PL). Two Mute Swans were at Lorain Harbor on 26 Jan. Snow Geese wintered in increased numbers locally. Three in Akron and 4 on the Burton CBC were indicative. Pierce reported that one of the blue phase birds in Akron was at the same locations as in the previous 4 years.

Wood Ducks were more common than in recent winters. At least ten were noted in the region. A Green-winged Teal was at Springfield Lake 26-30 Dec. (CH). Two remained at Lake Isaac until 21 Dec. (Hln) American Black Duck totals were not good. There were few counts above 50. Nineteen Northern Pintails were at

**WATERBIRD SURVEY FOR WINTER 1990 - 1991**

LOCATION	LR	CLFW	LR	GR	LAD	AKL	M/W	CLFE	CLFW	AKL	CLFW	CLFW
DATE	12/9	12/16	12/25	12/26	12/26	12/30	12/31	1/1	1/3	1/5	1/7	1/15
PB GREBE	6	•	11	1	•	6	•	1	•	4	1	1
HORNED GREBE	2	1	•	•	•	1	•	•	•	•	•	•
TUNDRA SWAN	5	•	11	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
CANADA GOOSE	375	•	500	23	400	225	1	85	25	2600	•	36
GRN WINGED TEAL	•	•	1	•	•	1	•	•	•	•	•	•
A BLACK DUCK	78	1	35	80	15	25	10	40	35	8	52	2
MALLARD	750	223	200	100	100	650	18	150	625	900	186	153
N SHOVELER	•	•	•	•	•	4	•	1	•	2	•	•
GADWALL	18	•	12	2	13	•	53	•	1	3	•	3
A WIGEON	2	•	1	•	•	•	1	•	•	•	•	•
CANVASBACK	2	•	2	32	4	•	•	32	6	1	•	4
REDHEAD	•	6	•	•	•	•	•	130	120	•	86	195
RNG-N DUCK	346	•	•	•	•	•	•	1	•	•	•	2
SCAUP (sp)	4	1016	•	8	•	•	•	332	5016	•	4000	3600
BLACK SCOTER	•	2	•	•	•	•	•	•	4	•	4	1
SURF SCOTER	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	13	•	4	8
WW SCOTER	•	3	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
C GOLDENEYE	•	141	6	25	13	11	•	28	76	14	18	85
BUFPLEHEAD	12	97	•	•	2	•	•	1	28	2	•	48
HOODED MERG	286	•	•	•	•	•	1	4	1	2	•	•
COMMON ME G.	1	1	•	20	•	•	•	•	4	•	•	•
RED BR MERG.	•	25	•	20	•	•	•	20	2	•	•	•
RUDDY DUCK	•	•	•	2	•	12	•	•	•	15	•	1

AKL - Akron Lakes; CLFE = Cleveland East, CLFW Cleveland West; GR = Grand River; LAD LaDue Res.;  
LR = Lake Rockwell; M/W Mogadore and Wingfoot Lakes

**WATERBIRD SURVEY FOR WINTER 1990 - 1991**

LOCATION	CLF	LAD	CLF	CLF	CLF	CU	CLF	CLF	CLF	CLF	CLF	CLF
DATE	1/20	1/21	1/27	1/29	2/4	2/10	2/12	2/16	2/19	2/21	2/26	2/28
PB GREBE	2	•	•	1	•	•	•	•	•	2	•	•
HORNED GREBE	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	1
CANADA GOOSE	6	355	5	67	400	34	8	106	4	35	60	74
GRN WINGED TEAL	•	•	•	•	•	1	•	•	•	•	•	•
A BLACK DUCK	5	10	•	81	89	12	42	52	10	22	6	14
MALLARD	106	20	251	418	492	140	378	355	152	354	209	288
N PINTAIL	•	•	•	•	•	•	3	1	•	•	•	•
GADWALL	10	34	•	2	1	2	2	6	•	2	2	•
A WIGEON	•	•	•	•	•	•	1	1	•	1	•	1
CANVASBACK	12	•	1	25	•	10	22	7	26	27	15	16
REDHEAD	110	•	2	26	1	105	285	112	130	234	18	129
RING-N DUCK	2	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	3
SCAUP (sp)	13	•	251	69	14	431	1900	442	1100	600	412	400
BLACK SCOTER	•	•	•	•	•	1	1	•	•	•	•	•
SURF SCOTER	2	•	•	•	•	3	•	•	1	6	4	9
WW SCOTER	•	•	•	•	•	1	•	•	1	1	1	•
C GOLDENEYE	39	•	1100	1400	172	44	7	32	•	72	80	152
BUFPLEHEAD	16	•	34	37	49	12	14	32	•	52	19	44
HOODED MERG	•	•	•	•	1	•	•	1	•	1	2	•
COMMON MERG.	•	4	358	42	•	•	•	12	1	•	76	10
RED BR MERG.	•	•	2	•	•	•	•	4	3	1	•	2
RUDDY DUCK	1	•	•	•	•	•	2	2	2	1	2	•

CLF = Cleveland from E. 72nd ST. to Rocky River; LAD LaDue Res.

HBSP on 29 Dec. A single was at Springfield Lake on 26 Dec. (LR) and one was seen at Lake Isaac on 25 Dec (HIn). A male seemed out of place, in an overflowing ditch, near Notre Dame Academy on 1 Jan. (AF). The Chasars saw 3 in Northfield on 6 Jan. Four Northern Shovelers were at Mogadore on 29 Dec. They were most likely responsible for the midwinter sightings in Akron. Before the ice formed, Gadwalls were the third most common puddle duck species. Good counts were had along Lake Erie as well as inland (especially Ladue and Wingfoot Lake).

**Canvasback** numbers were unremarkable except for 26 Dec. and 23 Jan. when 234 on the West Side (WNK), and 300 in Cleveland (DJH) were counted respectively. A male wintered at Summit Lake (LK, BDL). The maximum count of Redheads along the lakefront was 321 on 17 Jan. (WNK). Redheads were virtually absent inland. This winter a few Ring-necked Ducks were scattered along the lakefront, where they are not usually encountered. A male wintering below the dam at Lake Rockwell was probably the same one that has spent previous winters there. A few wintered in Northfield (DAC). Spectacular numbers of scaup were present in Rocky River until the January freeze. The Greater vastly outnumbered the Lessers. The high count was 7400 on 13 Jan. (WNK). The scaup picture on the east side was not as bright, with Hannikman's high count being a modest 400 on 27 Jan. Two

Oldsquaws were at Oberlin Reservoir on 17 Dec. (NK). A hen was at HBSP the last third of December (m.ob.). A male was there on 12 Jan. (EP). A male was at Moss Point on 29 Dec. (DJH). A female was at E 72nd St. on 26 Jan. (CH). Two females could be found (after much searching) at Edgewater Park during much of February (WNK, TL). Black Scoters were reported in the Rocky River area. with a high count of 4 on 7 Jan. (WNK) Two were off Euclid City Park on 15 Dec. (RH, LR). Surf Scoters were in extraordinary numbers near Rocky River Park until midwinter. The maximum tally was a noteworthy 14 on 27 Dec. (WNK). Three were at Moss Point on 1 Jan. (DJH). Another was at Sims Park the same day (CH). A male was in Lorain on 26 Jan. (TK) Up to 4 were at Edgewater in mid-February (m ob.) White-winged Scoters are usually our most common winter scoter. This season they were (while in their usual numbers) upstaged by the previous two species Two were at Summit Lake on 24 D.C. for the only inland report (BDL). A flock

of up to 100 Common Goldeneyes lingered all winter in Akron (LK, BDL). A concentration of 1500 along the West Side shoreline 27-29 Jan. was a significant local gathering (WNK). A few Hooded Mergansers were scattered throughout the region of most open water areas. Common Mergansers were conspicuous at the mouth of the Grand River all winter. Klamm's highest count in Cleveland was 358 on 27 Jan. Hannikman's total of 800 Red-breasted Mergansers along the lakefront on 27 Jan. was an excellent count for January. The flock of Ruddy Ducks that winters at Summit Lake was slightly higher in numbers than last year. Lane's highest count was 25 on 10 Feb.

**The only Turkey Vulture** reported was on 23 Feb. at Hinckley (CW). Northern Harriers were in their usual haunts in Lorain Co. A bird was observed at the Burton Wetlands Preserve on 29 Jan. (fide DB) Chasar reported one from the CVNRA on 23

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***Sandhill Cranes over Olmstead [Olmsted] Falls*** by Clark Stillman

*On the morning of November 8, 1990, was distracted by a strange and distant sound. It was a little before 6:00 AM when, through the open screened window, I heard what I thought were dogs barking, then Canada Geese, and then remembered the sound that I had heard one year earlier in Texas, Sandhill Cranes! Unfortunately, it was still dark so I could not see them and soon the sound was lost in the distance. Approximately 30 minutes later I heard what I suppose was a different flock, only this time it was light enough to see. I hurried out the side door in time to see 32 Sandhill Cranes flying very high and in a perfect 'V'. They were headed in an east southeast direction.*

(Editor's Note: This was the first November report of this species since November 8, 1920.)

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**SELECTED SPECIES TOTALS FROM LOCAL 1990 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS (CBC)**

	BURTON	BRECKSVILLE	CLEVELAND	CUY FALLS	ELYRA/LORAN	LAKEWOOD	MENTOR	WELLINGTON
GREAT BLUE HERON	2	3	19	29	14	3	4	4
A. BLACK DUCK	0	10	122	57	26	168	55	2
MALLARD	113	229	1053	1723	749	456	386	347
SCAUP (SP)	0	0	75	3	3	1011	24	1
BUFFLEHEAD	0	0	9	60	60	109	2	0
C GOLDENEYE	0	0	11	32	0	241	3	0
S SHINNED HAWK	1	0	1	8	0	0	3	2
COOPER'S HAWK	4	1	3	8	7	2	3	2
RED-TAILED HAWK	19	9	10	41	38	5	9	53
AMERICAN KESTREL	6	1	4	12	37	2	4	45
MOURNING DOVE	239	81	229	975	1377	88	180	958
E SCREECH-OWL	2	0	2	19	4	1	3	1
GREAT HORNED OWL	3	1	0	11	3	3	1	0
BELTED KINGFISHER	2	1	7	20	2	2	4	0
RED BELLIED WOODPECKER	21	26	19	100	21	7	14	14
DOWNY WOODPECKER	56	78	77	345	67	55	67	40
HAIRY WOODPECKER	30	18	23	69	8	11	15	16
NORTHERN FLICKER	8	5	3	32	12	0	3	9
BLUE JAY	113	109	166	571	319	36	58	82
AMERICAN CROW	434	100	326	973	95	181	218	124
BC CHICKADEE	254	188	395	1322	324	232	425	114
TUFTED TITMOUSE	106	102	144	459	134	39	99	35
RED BREASTED NUTHATCH	0	0	0	26	8	1	1	15
WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH	71	54	96	308	75	43	60	43
BROWN CREEPER	4	5	5	18	8	3	1	18
CAROLINA WREN	3	22	11	46	5	12	1	4
GOLDEN CROWNED KINGLET	6	17	12	126	7	28	5	1
EASTERN BLUEBIRD	10	1	10	1	17	0	2	10
AMERICAN ROBIN	13	2	89	70	93	84	6403	28
CEDAR WAXWING	22	83	73	191	309	7	40	0
EUROPEAN STARLING	430	437	3745	3559	2415	521	13405	2592
YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER	0	0	0	27	5	0	0	0
NORTHERN CARDINAL	179	121	164	945	234	75	155	89
A TREE SPARROW	77	94	162	1057	203	32	57	234
SONG SPARROW	30	39	44	339	30	15	17	9
SWAMP SPARROW	1	0	1	27	1	0	1	0
WHITE-THROATED SPARROW	7	2	3	32	12	4	32	3
WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW	0	0	4	14	0	0	2	7
DARK EYED JUNCO	76	60	113	790	376	98	155	95
RED-WINGED BLKBRD	93	0	53	8	8	0	67	5
COMMON GRACKLE	0	1	24	35	2	0	333	0
BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD	0	0	60	20	5	0	1937	2
PURPLE FINCH	1	1	0	11	3	0	9	0
HOUSE FINCH	105	76	217	1107	311	56	99	198
PINE SISKIN	1	40	18	7	2	2	6	0
AMERICAN GOLDFINCH	163	61	162	932	177	79	172	120
EVENING GROSBEAK	7	0	20	6	0	0	1	0

Feb. Small numbers of Sharp-shinned Hawks were reported from all seven counties.

Cooper's Hawks were described as fairly common everywhere by the Hoffmans and Rosche. Red-shouldered Hawks put in a good showing for our mostly urbanized region. This species was well reported from most counties including 4-5 in Lake County (DJH). They were described as common in Northfield and Stow. Up to 5 Rough-legged Hawks were

found at traditional Lorain Co locales (BR). A dark phase bird at Swine Creek Reservation on 14 Dec. was from a new location (DB). A Ring-necked Pheasant was seen along Pond Rd. in Geauga County on 20 Dec. (AT). Two were strolling near Mogadore Reservoir on 27 Feb (LR). Seven Northern Bobwhites were seen at Charlemont Reservation by Ken Reed on 21 Feb. It was not known if these were released birds. A Killdeer was tardy on 9

Dec. at E. 55th St. (TK). A bird at Perry on 3 Feb. probably wintered (DJH). On 24 Feb the first spring arrivals noted at HBSP (RH, IK), Northfield (DAC), and Akron (BDL), were two weeks later than last year.

An immature jaeger was seen under less than optimum conditions at Eastlake on 24 Dec. and was prudently left unidentified (AJF). "Gulls were so numerous it was difficult to ferret out anything else" (WNK).

The lakefront Bonaparte's Gull population peaked at 25,000 on 23 Dec. (RH). They virtually were gone after 2 Feb. Ring-billed Gulls were conservatively estimated at 37,000 on 15 Jan. (WNK). An albino Herring Gull was at Eastlake on 16 Dec (TK). It or others were at HBSP on 23 Dec. and at E. 55th St. on 27 Dec (DJH). First winter plumaged Thayer's Gulls were reported from Eastlake on 16 Dec. and 16 Feb. (RH). An adult Thayer's Gull was at E. 72nd St. on 12 Jan. (RH) and 16 Feb. (LR). Two first winter Iceland Gulls were at Eastlake on 16 Dec. (RH, TK). An adult was there on 23 Dec. (RH). Another was in Lorain on 5 Jan. (ECP). Cleveland hosted this species on 16 and 23 Feb. (TL). A first winter bird was at the Lake County Landfill in Painesville Township on 26 Jan. (DJH). First winter birds were noted on 16, 18, and 23 Feb. in Lorain (DJH, TL). Two Lesser Black-backed

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### Carolina Wrens... consistently heard in Kirtland Hills.

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Gulls were in Eastlake on 8 Dec. (RH). An adult was at HBSP on 23 Dec. (RH). Two at Oberlin Reservoir on 2 Jan. were noteworthy for their inland occurrence (DJH). Up to 2 were in Lorain in Feb. (DJH, TL). A Glaucous Gull was reported from Rocky River on 13 Jan. (TK). Several were found at Eastlake, E. 72nd St. and Lorain most of the winter (m.ob.). Great Black-backed Gulls were typically numerous, with up to 400 being counted in Lorain.

A Great Horned Owl was well camouflaged in its nest tree along the Zimmerman Trail on 3 Feb. Barred Owls were reported from all counties except Medina. Ken Reed noted 2 Short-eared

Owls along Smith Road in Lorain Co. on 17 Feb. Belted Kingfishers were very scarce. Two Red-headed Woodpeckers were reported on the Mentor CBC. Nancy Ibsen reported the only Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers. Both were seen in Bath, one on 27 Jan. and the other on 31 Jan. Northern Flickers were very conspicuous in the CVNRA and in Akron. Pileated Woodpeckers were plentiful near Burton and in the Sand Run area of Akron.

**Horned Larks** were scarce until mid-February. Two at Lake Isaac on 4 Feb. seemed odd for the location (HIn). Albinism was the most unusual of the chickadee reports. John Augustine reported a partially albino Black-capped Chickadee at his feeder in Parkman. Kellerman saw a chickadee with an entirely white head in Eastlake on 15 Dec. Brown Creepers were as expected. It seemed that any observer who took the time to go for a walk in the woods found them in small numbers. Carolina Wrens were in exceptional numbers in the greater Akron area (NI, LK). Klaus reported them to be consistently heard in Kirtland Hills throughout the winter. A Winter Wren was at Lower Shaker Lake on 15 Dec. (PP). Another was tardy in Hunting Valley on 16 Dec. (RR). A bird at Lake Rockwell 15 Jan. - 11 Feb. constituted one of our few mid-winter records (LR). Golden-crowned Kinglets were relatively widespread and numerous in December. The



Immature Bald Eagle - Lake Rockwell 6 Dec. 1990  
by Larry Rosche

Hoffmans noted two at Findley SP on 23 Feb.

Eastern Bluebirds were very well represented, especially in Lorain County, where birders had little trouble finding them. Rickard reported up to 4 at Holden Arboretum in February. Two Hermit Thrushes were in Perry for the Mentor CBC (LR). American Robins wintered in large numbers. More than 6000 were roosting at Mentor Marsh (HW). Hundreds were found in flocks throughout the CVNRA, Portage and Summit Counties, particularly around Kent State and Akron universities (LR). Northern Mockingbirds were seen along North Marginal Road on several occasions by various observers. A bird near Findley SP on 24 Feb. was from a new location (BR). Cedar Waxwings were well represented in all counties, particularly Lorain. Yellow-rumped Warblers were scarce but widespread.

Rufous-sided Towhees received little mention. Stover and Rosche stumbled onto a flock of well over 600 American Tree Sparrows at Kamburoff's Farms 'Pheasants Forever' project in Kent on 16 Dec. Field Sparrow totals on local CBCs were high. A Fox Sparrow was in Kent, with hundreds of other sparrows, on 16 Dec. (LR, WS). One was noted at the Carlisle Visitor Center on 5 Jan. (GG). Don Busic found Lincoln's Sparrows to be relatively common in the downtown area until 22 Dec. Swamp Sparrows were very scarce. Several observers felt that White-throated Sparrows were also difficult to find this season. Others found them to be very common in many areas of

the region. Rolik indicated that they lingered on Public Square until 28 Jan. White-crowned sparrows wintered in expected small numbers in Perry and Kent. An "**Oregon Junco**" was reported from Shaker Heights on 31 Dec (IK). A bird with very rusty flanks was along Oak Hill Road in the CVNRA on 19 Jan. (LR).

Two Lapland Longspurs were seen at HBSP on 24 Feb. (IK). Snow Buntings were generally scarce although they were widespread for a brief period following the large snowfall in February. The Hoffmans were the only contributors to find them along the lake in January. A flock of 50 in a vacant schoolyard in the center of Stow on 16 Feb. was unique (BMc).

An Eastern Meadowlark was an early returnee at HBSP on 24 Feb. (RH, IK). Blackbirds were arriving from the south at expected February times. What is hard to explain is the origin of the great numbers of grackles, cowbirds, and blackbirds that winter locally. Large flocks of mixed icterids were seen in South Akron, Mentor on the Lake, and other east side locales throughout the winter. Red-winged Blackbirds were in full song at Shipman Pond on 3 Feb. (m ob.). Fair numbers of Rusty Blackbirds wintered in South Akron (BDL). Four at Lost Nation Airport on 1 Jan. was a surprise (DJH). Winter finches were as scarce as in any recent winter. Other than on CBC's, Purple Finches were unreported except for one at the French Creek Interpretive Center on 3 Feb. (BR). House Finches were felt by many to be down in num-

bers. They apparently were simply not visiting feeders, because with the first warm days of February their song could be heard throughout the region. Pine Siskins were locally uncommon. The high count was 40 at Brecksville on 22 Dec. (Hln). Thirty Evening Grosbeaks were regularly seen during most of the winter, at the feeder of Lois and Harold Wallin in Brecksville.

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## NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

**EURASIAN WIGEON** -John Edwards found a male at Rocky River Park on 2 Jan.

**HARLEQUIN DUCK** - A stunning male was at Headlands BSP on 16 Dec. (Hannikman, Kellerman). A female was seen by many at E. 55th St. during January. Another female was noted at Edgewater Park on 23 Feb. (LePage). An immature male was reported in Cleveland 20 Jan. to 9 Feb. (Klamm, Hoffman, LePage, Rickard).

**BALD EAGLE** - Three different individuals were seen at Lake Rockwell from 5 Dec. through the period (Holt, Rosche). An immature was at Avon Lake on 20 Jan. (Kellerman). An immature fed at the 'hot waters' in Lorain on 16 Feb. (LePage). An adult was seen irregularly in January near Bacon Woods along the Vermillion River (m.ob.).

**NORTHERN GOSHAWK** - The bird reported during the fall was seen intermittently in Lorain through the winter (Pogacnik).

An immature male visited The Cleveland Museum of Natural History on 26 Feb. (Webster). It is interesting to note that, although this species has been thoroughly documented many times, no diagnostic photograph has ever been obtained in the region.

**GOLDEN EAGLE** - Gary Gerrone spotted our first bird since 1984 on 18 Jan. in Elyria Township. It was last seen flying toward Midway Mail.

**MERLIN** - A unbelievably tame bird was photographed at Lighthouse Park in Fairport Harbor on 29 Dec. (Hannikman, Rosche). Kiwi and Rosche saw another female at E. 55th St. in hot pursuit of Rock Doves on 2 Jan. The Klamms saw a bird take a short bath at E. 55th St. on 13 Jan. The previously reported bird at Lost Nation Airport was seen throughout the period. (Fjeldstad, Hoffman).

**PEREGRINE FALCON** - Although Klaus and Rolik reported that the downtown pair was seen less frequently this season, they were seen anywhere along the lakefront from Burke Airport to E 72nd St. They were setting up house near the nest tray on the 12th floor of the Terminal Tower by the end of the period. Fjeldstad reported this species chasing Rock Doves at Wildwood Lakefront State Park on 12 Jan.

**PURPLE SANDPIPER** - Several remained from the fall season at Headlands BSP (to the delight of the editor). A high of 3 was reported on 27 Dec. (Kittle). The last sighting was 3 Jan. by Dick and Jean Hoffman.

**FRANKLIN'S GULL** - Summit County's first record of this species was on the snowy morning of 24 Dec. at Akron's Springfield Lake. The bird was in adult winter plumage and allowed Rosche to get close enough for diagnostic photographs.

**LITTLE GULL** - On 8 Dec. an adult was at Eastlake (Hannikman, Hoffman). Two adults were at Headlands BSP on 16 Dec (Hannikman, Kellerman). One was in Cleveland on 3 Jan. (Hoffman). Two were at Eastlake on 20 Jan. (Fjeldstad).

**BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE** An immature with a very dark collar was photographed at Eastlake on 1 Dec. (Rosche). Two were in Lorain 5 Jan (Kellerman). These were viewed by many through most of January. Ray Hannikman watched an immature as it circled over the Shoreway and landed on the CEI Power Plant on 12 Feb. Bruce Glick and others saw it perched there an hour later.

**SNOWY OWL** - A bird with considerable dark feathering was located at the northwest tip of Burke Airport on 1 Jan. (Kellerman, m.ob.). It remained at this location until 12 Feb. (Klamm, LePage).

**LONG-EARED OWL** - The first report of this species since 1988 was on the Wellington CBC at Caley Wildlife Area in Lorain County on 2 Jan. (Gerrone).

**NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL** A bird was at the Seiberling Naturealm for the second straight winter from 25 Jan. (Stover. m.ob).

**RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET** - A bird was reported from the CVNRA on the extraordinary late date of 13 Jan. (Kopka). His observation was lengthy and from as close as 5 feet. This extraordinary record can only be explained as a result of the mild winter weather up to that date. Only February is without a record of this minute species.

**NORTHERN SHRIKE** - Nancy Ibsen and Bert Szabo located a previously reported bird at Firestone Metropark on 10 Dec. A bird was seen infrequently within two miles of the previously mentioned bird in Akron during January (Lane). An immature was in Hudson on 13 Jan. (Rosche) and again on 15 Jan. (Holt). Bob MacFarland saw an adult in Kent on the 15th. It was located again on 23 Jan. (Rosche). Norma Kraps had a bird in Lorain County on 15 Jan. Don Best found one at th Walter C. Best Wildlife Preserve on 29 Jan. The Hoffmans located still another in Perry on 26 Jan. LePage saw it in the same location on 3 Feb. Dwight and Ann Chasar found yet another in the CVNRA on 9 Feb.

**PINE WARBLER** - Grace Rymer found a beautifully plumaged male visiting her feeder in Kent on the Cuyahoga Falls CBC on 16 Dec. The bird visited her feeding station daily through the period. It was seen by Rosche on 23 Dec. This species now joins Yellow-rumped Warbler as our only two warblers to have sight records for all months.

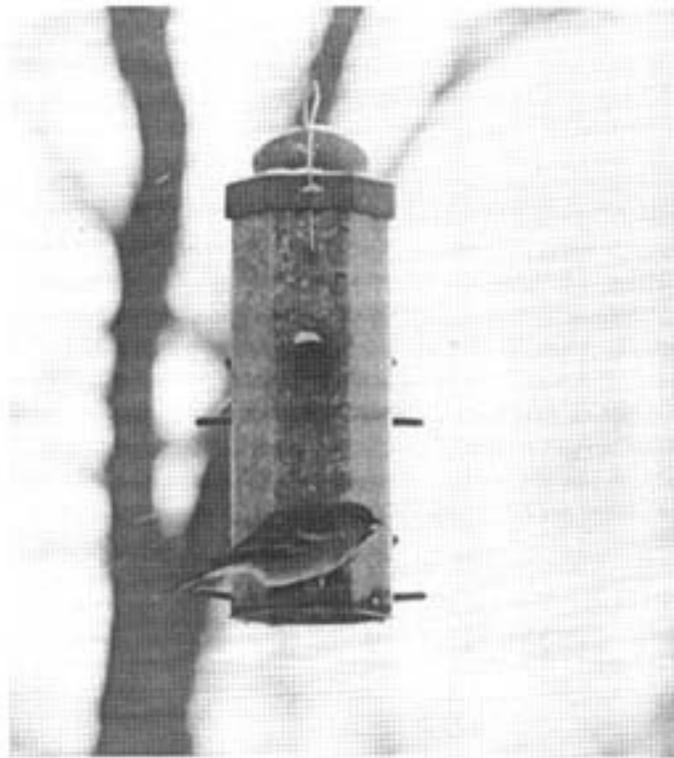
**OVENBIRD** -Our first winter record of this species was well documented during the Cuyahoga Falls CBC on 16 Dec. The bird was seen for 15 minutes in a yard in Tallmadge by Ann Biscan and Tina Stockton.

**SHARP-TAILED SPARROW** - The first December report of this species since 1952 was from Gordon Park by Tom LePage on 11 Dec.

**LINCOLN'S SPARROW** - Ron Salisbury meticulously described a bird on the Cuyahoga Falls CBC and reported it to Bert Szabo on 16 Dec. Gerrone and Kraps reported one at the Carlisle Visitor Center throughout January. Reports of this species at this time of year are extremely rare.

**NORTHERN ORIOLE** - An immature male oriole visited Kopka's feeder on several occasions. His description was that of an apparent "Bullock's" type oriole. This was the first written documentation for this form of Northern Oriole in the 87 year history of *The Cleveland Bird Calendar*. Ginger Kopka obtained photographs on 19 Dec. If these prove to be enough to identify the bird to form then it would be Ohio's second accepted record. Marilyn Bangs photographed it on 20 Jan. 1991. She saw the bird until mid-March. As we go to press the bird has resurfaced at the Kopka feeder.

**Addendum:** A late report of at least 32 **Sandhill Cranes** migrating over Olmsted Falls on 8 November 1990 was received from Clark Stillman. See page 4.



Bullock's Oriole - Akron - 19 Dec. 1990  
by Ginger Kopka

## FIELD NOTES

### December Northern Oriole - in Ohio? by Len Kopka

My backyard in West Akron consists mainly of mixed deciduous hardwoods. It slopes directly into a deep ravine that is part of Akron's Sand Run Metropark. Resident chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, starlings, woodpeckers, and goldfinches regularly deplete the seed from my feeders. The headlines of my feeding station are the two Pileated Woodpeckers that whack away at my suet just 30 feet outside my patio window. Although my yard has produced it's fair share of avian surprises during both migration seasons. December is generally a lackluster month.

So you can imagine the

excitement on December 8, 1990 when I saw an orange colored bird foraging on the ground among a small flock of starlings. My Nikon 9x25s are always within arm's reach and, within seconds, I knew I had an immature mole oriole. I studied the bird for about 2 minutes, getting only brief glimpses of key field marks. Succumbing to temptation, I finally committed the mistake of fetching my field guides, quickly to my bookshelf, quickly back. This is more than enough time for a rare oriole to disappear for the next two weeks.

By the time the bird returned on December 23, Larry Rosche and I had already concluded that I may be documenting

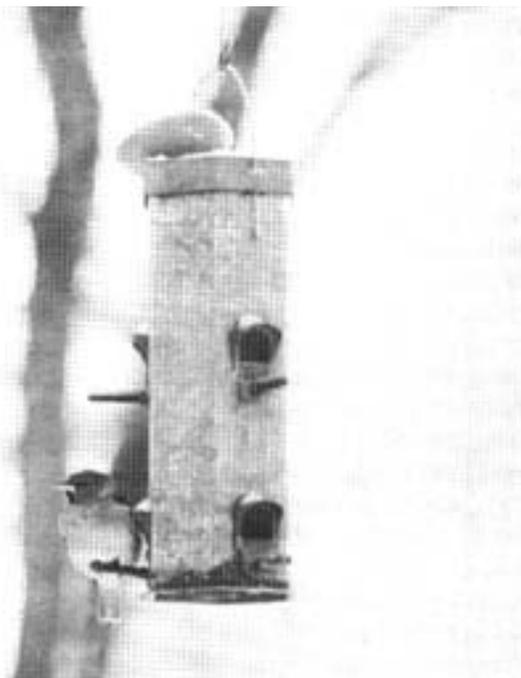
Ohio's 2nd record of a winter-

ing "Bullock's Oriole". A literature search revealed that the only other documentation was at a Columbus feeder during successive winters 1974/75 and 1975/76. Other references suggest that wintering records of the western counterpart to our Baltimore Oriole have originated from points as far away as the eastern seaboard, usually at feeders.

The bird was about 7" long. The head, nape, and breast were orange. A pair of white wing bars (one narrow, one bold) were prominent on the otherwise dull olive/gray wings. The olive color on the back extended all the way down to the tip of the tail. The undertail coloration was much lighter, tinted with orange, and the belly was nearly all white. A very faint black eyeline extended from the base of the black bill through the eye. The throat boasted a distinct but rather blotchy black bib.

During the next week while I was away from home, the bird reappeared for a final encore. My wife, Ginger, was able to take a series of excellent photographs. The pictures have been studied by a number of knowledgeable birders and they all have concurred that this was not a typical Northern Oriole. I was also delighted to learn 3 weeks later that a neighbor, Marilyn Bangs, was regularly seeing an orange bird in her backyard.

(The photographs were sent to Paul Lehman for his expert opinion. A report on his findings will follow. L.R.)



Bullock's Oriole - Akron - 19 Dec. 1990  
by Ginger Kopka

### Hummingbird Identification

by Bruce G. Peterjohn

The field identification of many immature hummingbirds is a very challenging proposition, making the identification of silent Empidonax flycatchers easy in comparison. Capture and careful measurement of the hummingbird is often required to conclusively identify out of range or late individuals. Since attempts to capture the Akron hummingbird were unsuccessful (see Vol. 86. No. 4), its identification was confirmed through a combination of careful field observations and analyses of photographs.

Initial observations indicated this individual belonged to either the genus Archilochus or Calypte. The identification of many hummingbirds belonging to these genera is very difficult or impossible in the field (see Baltosser, 1987, North

American Bird Bander 12: 151-166). Fortunately, the Akron hummingbirds vocalizations were heard repeatedly and were consistent with the genus Archilochus; both Anna's (Calypte anna) and Costa's (C. costae) hummingbirds give distinctive vocalizations very different from those given by our Ruby-throated Hummingbird (Archilochus colubris).

The remaining problem was to determine if this hummingbird was a lingering Ruby-throated or a stray Black-chinned Hummingbird (Archilochus alexandri). First, the bird had to be aged and sexed. It was readily classified as an immature male, based on the numerous buffy edgings to the nape and upper back feathers and the 2-3 iridescent feathers on the throat (see Baltosser, 1987). These throat feathers reflected purplish colors under some

conditions and reddish colors under other conditions and were not useful field characteristics.

According to Balltosser (1987), immature Male Ruby-throated and Black-chinned hummingbirds can only be separated by measurements taken from birds in the hand. Since the bird was not captured, these measurements had to be estimated from photographs. Certain parts of the bird feeder were measured and, when compared with the bird's bill in the photographs, bill length was determined to be 13.0mm. This length is too small to be an immature male Black-chinned Hummingbird, but well within the range of an immature male Ruby-throated.

(Editor's Note: Mr. Peterjohn has contributed greatly to the *Cleveland Bird Calendar* during the past decade. We wish him continued success with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Patuxent, Maryland. His outstanding field reports will be missed.)

**Observation of an adult, partial albino, Red-tailed Hawk**

*by Robert McCullough*

On Sunday, December 30, 1990 at about 1:00 p.m. I received a call from a homeowner on Aquila Road, Claridon Township, Geauga County. He said that he and his wife had been watching a large white bird for several hours that morning. It had been sitting in a tree overlooking a pond in their backyard.

By 2:45 p.m. my son, Richard,

and I drove into their back yard hoping to see the bird from the car. A Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) was seen sitting in the tree tops near at hand but no white bird. After 15 minutes, walking to the back of the property without success, we were about to leave when a small bird moved among the trees. We attempted to find it. Both my son and I lost sight of the small bird when a large white bird appeared in our binoculars at about 500 yards. It flew showing large amounts of white feathering. Some wing feathers were of a normal Red-tailed Hawk color, and the tail feathers, while not red, were a light cinnamon color.

Two days later, on the Burton Christmas Bird Count, the bird was again sighted about 1/2 mile from where it was first seen. Although it eludes some observers, this striking bird continues to be seen in the area.

**A recent history of winter Merlin occurrence in the Cleveland region.**

*by Larry Rosche*

Local winter occurrence of Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) has always been a subject of spirited debate. Previous to 1980, most winter sightings were simply written off as misidentified accipiters. Verified recent winter sightings have increased and, in all likelihood, reflect both the improved numerical status of the species and increased observer awareness. In searching *The Cleveland Bird Calendar* records of 1949-1990 I

found 7 reports from December through February prior to 1980. Three of these were in late February and were probably early migrants. All were single observer sightings and one bird was reported hovering near the CEI Power Plant. This is the type of report which caused the previously mentioned skepticism, since hovering is not a typical Merlin behavior.

The bird that started people thinking that Merlins may winter (albeit rarely) was a bird found by Woody Stover at Summit Lake in Akron on 21 December 1980. This bird was seen subsequently by many observers and detailed written observations were turned in to *The Cleveland Bird Calendar*. Since this sighting there have been several individuals that have wintered. A female was diagnostically photographed during 1985-86 and 1986-87 winters in the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area along Major Road. A female has spent the last three winters in the vicinity of Lost Nation Airport in Lake County. A male was photographed there on 27 December 1989. A female or immature was seen intermittently this past winter at various locations along the lakefront from Burke Airport to E. 72nd St. In addition to these more or less cooperative birds, there have been single sightings at Burke Airport in December 1988, on the Mentor CBC in 1989, and in Tallmadge and Fairport Harbor in late December 1990. A report of a Merlin wintering in the region is still subject to scrutiny but no longer thought of as an impossibility.

**Notice:** All reports to *The Cleveland Bird Calendar* are archived in the library of The Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

**Rare Bird Hotline:** (216) 289-2473 The hotline is sponsored by the Kirtland Bird Club. In cases of extreme rarities (i.e. Western Grebe, Mew Gull, Varied Thrush, Harris' Sparrow, etc) please contact the editors as soon as possible.

**Invitation:** The Kirtland Bird Club meets the first Wednesday of the month except July and August at 7:45 P.M. at The Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Visitors are always welcome.

**Field Study:** On the first Sunday of every month a census is conducted at Headlands Beach State Park. The purpose is to study the long term occurrence patterns of migrant and resident birds of the Grand River and Fairport Harbor section of the region. For more information call Larry Rosche at 678-9408 or Ray Hannikman at 261-4047.

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**Inquiries** regarding subscription to *The Cleveland Bird Calendar* should be addressed to: Joan M. Palmer, The Cleveland Museum of Natural History, 1 Wade Oval Drive, University Circle, Cleveland, Ohio 44106. The annual subscription rate is \$7.50.

**Field reports**, artwork, papers, and comments should be directed to Larry Rosche, 7473 Sylvan Drive, Kent, Ohio 44240 by 15 June 1991.