

The Ohio



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The Ohio Cardinal is a quarterly publication devoted to the study and appreciation of Ohio's birdlife.

The Ohio Cardinal exists to provide a permanent and timely record of the abundance and distribution of birds in Ohio; to help document the occurrence of rare species in the state; to provide information on identification of birds; and to provide information on birding areas within Ohio.

The Ohio Cardinal invites readers to submit articles on unusual occurrences of birds, bird distribution within the state, birding areas in Ohio, identification tips, and other aspects of ornithology. Bird reports and photographs are welcome from any area of the state. Report forms are not a necessity but will be supplied upon request. Unusual species should be documented, and forms to do so are available upon request from the Editor, Publisher, and Records Committee Secretary.

Seasonal Report Due Dates	Please send all reports to:
Winter (Dec.-Feb.) - March 25	Bill Whan
Spring (Mar.-May) - June 25	223 E. Tulane Rd.
Summer (June-July) - August 25	Columbus, OH 43202
Autumn (Aug.-Nov.) - December 25	danielel@iwaynet.net

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On the Cover: **Mew Gull** - Headlands Beach State Park, Lake Co., 12 March 2001.

Photo by Lou Gardella.

Spring 2001 Overview

by Bill Whan

Migration is spring's big story. For birds a vital strategy in reproducing their kind, for human observers it is an inexhaustibly fascinating spectacle. Sadly, our interests and those of the birds do not always coincide. They want to reach the breeding grounds as quickly as possible, and we—aware of being rather selfish about it—wish their progress stalled long enough for us to see and study them. It is easy to forget that a fallout of migrants bedecking the trees is as unlucky an event for them as it is lucky for us.

So we congratulate the birds on this spring's very successful migration—a direct connection, with no layovers, detours, or delays! There is no evidence that fewer of them reached the breeding grounds to the north—our *local* breeders arrived in force, and on time, after all—but it was hard not to feel a little deprived. By and large, field trips yielded a decent variety of migrants, but only determined efforts found more than a few individuals of the species present. Some veteran observers called it the “worst migration in decades”; others used saltier language. Suffice it to say that for many observers this spring, looking for birds seemed too much like work.

We could blame the weather. The latter half of April was dry with few storms, and warm (April was 5.8°F above average, in Columbus the third warmest on record), with mostly southern breezes, and the first half of May followed suit (in central Ohio, the first ten days of May averaged a hefty 9.4°F above normal). This tended to whisk migrants through quickly by night. We usually expect spring migration to proceed in orderly fashion, gradually from south to north, but the weather put first reports haphazardly all over the map. Our chilly and rainy latter half of May (in Columbus our fifth-wettest in recorded history) made it harder to find birds, as did the spring's precocious vegetation. Equally frustrating conditions must have prevailed continent-wide, as birders from Cape May to Cape Flattery reported a disappointing migration. Our most dramatic weather arrived 7-12 April, when very strong winds out of the south accompanied record high temperatures, concentrating peak raptor numbers at either end of the Lake Erie shore, and unprecedented numbers and varieties of other early April migrants such as shorebirds and sparrows, including some record overflights.

So, questions about where the thrushes were, or the cuckoos, or the warblers, were mostly rhetorical, for we knew where they were. Perhaps those of us hankering for exuberant song and impressive numbers of newly-arrived migrants should have gone to the southern counties instead of mooching wistfully around the Magee bird trail: fully half of Ohio's warbler species are residents, after all, and they arrived on or ahead of schedule to nest, and in profusion. As for the Canada-bound nesters, they showed up in good numbers, too—in Canada.

Unlike the last two springs, some water birds failed to show up: red-necked and eared grebes, Hudsonian godwits, red knots, and red-necked phalaropes went unreported. Reported numbers of the scarcer Ardeidae—little blue herons, snowy